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PYRAMID OF PAPANTLA.

MEXICO,

AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS:

BY

BRANTZ MAYER,

SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES LEGATION TO THAT COUNTRY IN 1841 AND 1842.

THIRD EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH THE HISTORICAL PORTION BROUGHT DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME.

PHILADELPHIA:

G. B. ZIEBER & COMPANY.

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1847.

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TO THE

HONORABLE POWHATAN ELLIS,

LATE

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO MEXICO,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

BRANTZ MAYER.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

The public was kind enough to purchase the two first editions of this book within a few months after their publication. The work has, consequently, been out of print for more than a year, and I would not have ventured to offer a third edition, if the relations between Mexico and our Union had not seemed to indicate that a new interest has been aroused as to the condition and destiny of that distracted Republic.

Since the year 1843, several revolts against the existing government have taken place in Mexico, and the diplomatic intercourse between us has been of increasing importance, not only on account of the Texan dispute, but in consequence of a growing anxiety as to what is likely to be hereafter our Southern boundary, and along what parallel of latitude it is to run westwardly towards the Pacific.

These considerations have induced me to revise a work, which, three years ago, I prepared for the press in the brief space of thirty days; and,—whilst I crave pardon for that act of indiscretion, and am thankful for the favor with which it, nevertheless, was welcomed—I must frankly declare that I have found no cause to alter the statement of a single fact or opinion. My aim was to present an unprejudiced picture of Mexico, and I hope I may be permitted to declare without vanity, that I have the satisfaction to know from Mexicans whose good esteem is worthy of all respect, that my views of their country and their character were received as the most just and favorable that had been published.

The kind feelings with which I left Mexico in the winter of 1842 remain unchanged towards her true patriots, and towards the magnificent country which has been so convulsed and torn by the broils, the ambition and the avarice of contending factionists. With Religious Toleration,

General Education, and entire Domestic Tranquillity, what might not Mexico become in a few years under the hand of a strong and virtuous Government! During my residence there and my travels throughout the Republic, I had often to recognize fine talents, good personal qualities, and vast natural resources, but all, generally neglected or denied the opportunity of advancement. I never saw a modern plough on a Mexican farm, a rake in a husbandman's hand, a wheelbarrow in a laborer's grasp, a cart bearing the ordinary burthens of trade, or a Bible in a Mexican house! That strange race of antique men in which Celti-Gallic, Celt-Iberian, Carthagenian, Roman, Vandalic, Visigothic and Moorish blood had mingled, was, again, crossed in Mexico by the Indian, and even dashed, in some instances, with the African. It is a mosaic blood and furnishes a curious matter for the study of physiologists. It is a race striving for new things, yet regretting to quit its grasp on the old. In speculation it looks forward; yet, in the Superstitions of Religion and in the crude primitiveness of Art and Trade, it cleaves to the past. Mexico is a graft rather of the wild Arab on the base Indian, than of the Spanish Don on the noble Aztec. From the *bondage* of superstitious custon. Mexico requires disenthralment. But, to effect this delivery she must have PEACE imposed on her by a firm hand. Since 1823, no less than seventeen revolutions have succeeded her rejection of the Spanish yoke. Can it be said that such a nation is competent to govern itself? Has it ever governed itself? Nay, has it done so, peacefully, even for a single year? Can such a miscalled democracy have an effective public opinion? With rulers shifting like the winds, what permanent policy can such a government pursue. Indeed, in all her vicissitudes, in what has Mexico exhibited the slightest symptom of constancy, save in her deep, immedicable hostility to our Union?

If this were a mere abstract, sapless dislike,—a sort of hereditary hatred like that between France and England or between the Genoese, the Tuscans and the Neapolitans—we might pass it over and trust to Time to make us better friends; but this animosity is growing into an active, untiring, energetic, agent of annoyance, until we see no possible termination to our difficulties but such authoritative interposition as will convince Mexico that this Union means to maintain its station as head of the American governments, and is resolved to put an end forever to the idea of European interference in the affairs of our Continent. This is a policy that should be adopted, and, if successfully pursued, would unquestionably terminate in a firm alliance between the two Republics and the formation of a treaty, offensive and defensive, which would secure our perpetual amity.

In regard to the domestic peace of Mexico, I have great hesitation in speaking with any certainty as to a mode by which it might be secured. The notion, broached in European and American papers, that Mexico is willing to establish a monarchy and receive a royal scion of some European house to grace her throne, is only one of the thousand ridiculous surmises that are hazarded by blundering paragraphists. Nothing can be

more unpopular in Mexico with all classes than the hint of monarchy, save perhaps, a suggestion to fill the throne with a French or Spanish Prince. No one would venture on so perilous an eminence. The Church and the Military would oppose the scheme as inimical to their present power;—the People would oppose it as at variance with the spirit of their Revolution. The throne would soon be hewn to a block Despotism in Mexico must be *masked*, as it is wherever it exists in this century.

I may be told that this is surely a very bad state of things and that humanity must mourn over the misfortunes of the race, but, that the people of the United States have no more right to interfere in the matter than they have to settle the domestic differences in the family of a neighbor who lives unhappily with his wife. I beg leave, however, to dissent from this opinion. Mexico is not merely a social neighbor whose rights are guarded and whose offences are punished by municipal laws, but she is one of the great family of nations on this Continent, striving to free herself from the tutelage under which she groaned for three centuries, while the Spanish yoke hung round her neck. She is bound by international ties, pledged in international treaties, burthened with international contracts, and, above all, loaded with debts to foreigners, growing not only out of regular loans, but forced from individuals by exactions, wrongs, personal injury and enormous injustice. The whole foreign world, is therefore, directly interested in this distracted realm independently of the concern that all Christian men must feel in the progress of nations;—but, of all parts of Christendom, none has so deep a stake in it as these United States.

If, as in France, since the fearful revolution of '98, each popular outbreak had been but a feebler swing of the great democratic pendulum, bringing it nearer and nearer to repose and tranquillity, we should bid these people "God speed," and hail them heartily on their way to republican greatness. But, instead of approaches to peace and happiness, the pendulum of Mexican revolutions has swung, with each vibration, further and further from the centre of gravity; so that, instead of poising at length like a plummet above the Truth and the Right, it is now converted into a vast weapon, whose terrific gyrations threaten with ruin everything within the scope of its tremendous whirl.

There is, however, another view of the matter, which should have weight in the consideration of Mexican affairs.

A recent letter from Yucatan, received at New Orleans, by way of Mexico, says:

"The people of Yucatan are in daily expectation of declaring the independence of that province. Offences on the part of the Mexican Congress towards Yucatan have dictated this step. Two assemblies, composed of the most distinguished personages, have already met to discuss the measure of separation, and much is said of seeking assistance, should it be necessary, from the cabinet at Washington."

Nearly four years ago, I took occasion, in a private interview with a distinguished statesman then in power, to indicate the probable disruption of the *soi-disant* Republic, of which this seems to be the premonitory symptom. The people of the Mexican Provinces will no longer consent to be the prey of the central chiefs, who make a Paris of the city of Mexico, and control the nation when they hold the key of the capital. Distracted, dissatisfied, divided, fragmentary, each one will, perhaps, set up for itself—Zacetecas, Durango, Coahuila, California, and the rest, going off in separate discontent and establishing themselves as petty principalities. Each of these, in the course of a few years, will grow into little Mexicos. The concentrated venom of the whole Republic will be diffused in weakened virus among the lopped members. Every clipped head of the original hydra will sprout into mimic serpenthood, and, although the hiss of the rattlesnake may not be as dangerous as the fang of the monster, yet the *ultimate* task of the Eagle, in controlling the dangerous brood, will be infinitely multiplied.

I beg leave in writing thus of Mexican matters to be distinctly understood as not encouraging the conquest of that country or endeavouring to cherish the war and plunder spirit that would eagerly prey on the fair domain of the invaded Republic. No such idea is seriously mine for a moment; but it is time that Mexico should be aroused to a sense of her own position, and it is still more important to have her future policy distinctly defined in relation to the affairs of this Continent and Europe.

It has recently been asserted by an American writer that the Province of Rio de la Plata has been decimated *during the administration of the celebrated Rosas*, and the allegation is enforced by an extract from the "Tables of Blood," of which the following *resumé* is given by Don José Rivera Indarte·

Poisoned,	4
Throats cut,	3,765
Shot,	1,393
Assassinated,	722
Slain in battle,	14,920
Killed in skirmishes, Military punishments, &c., &c.,	1,600
	22,404

"During the frightful massacres of October, 1840, and April, 1842, the heads of well known citizens were paraded through the streets in carts, accompanied by indecent music and followed by the cries of '*who'll buy peaches? Who'll buy oranges?*' The bodies of other victims were exposed, naked, in the public market place, the severed heads adorned with blue ribbons—labeled, '*Beef with the hide on—Carne con cuero!*' One of the ornaments of the drawing-room of Rosas, which has been seen again and again by foreigners visiting at his house, is a glass case contain-

ing the salted ears of Colonel Borda, which were sent to the daughter of Rosas."*

These and similar outrages are alleged as the cause of the recent intervention of England and France. The interference is said to be one of merciful humanity, and we trust that the continued succession of mobs and revolutions with which Mexico has been scourged for the last twenty years will not reduce her to the sway of some tyrant like Rosas who will deluge her with native blood and compel us to be no longer indifferent spectators of her misrule.

In such a juncture the course of this country will be perfectly clear. True statesmanship looks steadily to the advancement of mankind—to the eradication of all brutality from our race—to the assertion of the omnipotence of Peace and Reason in modern government. If it be the will of God that Christian civilization and refinement are to be spread over this world, I shall hail the day as a blessed one for the Mexican people when perfect peace and perfect alliance shall be established between us as *Independent Nations*. But if it be the Divine fiat that *we are to interfere in Mexican politics*, and that the various bloods of the Mexican race are finally to mingle with the mighty stream of the Anglo-Saxon, which seems destined to fill every vein and artery of this mighty Continent, then, assuredly, will our distracted neighbors, at length, secure to their country tranquillity, progress, and glory.

BALTIMORE, 1846.

* "Buenos Ayres and the Republic of the Banda Oriental," by Mrs. S. P. Jenkins—in the American Review, vol. 3d, pp. 161, 163.

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MEXICO

AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS

LETTER I.

VOYAGE TO VERA CRUZ.

I LEFT New-York on the 27th of October, 1841, with a fair wind, and on the twelfth day after, at sunrise, saw the lofty peak of Orizaba, towering above the distant line of the western horizon.

I have rarely beheld a more beautiful sight than this was. The maritime Alps, as seen from the Gulf of Lyons, present a spectacle of great majesty and beauty. But this grand and solitary peak, lifting its head more than 17,000 feet above the ocean, the sentinel, as it were, of a land toward which you may still sail for days before you arrive, has struck every traveller with wonder since the days when Cortez first hailed it on his adventurous voyage for the conquest of Mexico.

* * * * * *

Our vessel has been quite full of passengers in cabin and steerage; merchants, going out to gather in their fortunes in this country; manufacturers, keen and thrifty, with their machinery, ready to take advantage of the ample profits to be reaped in the "cotton line" from the protection of *national* industry in Mexico; a German student, fresh from his *alma mater*, adventuring for fortune in Vera Cruz, in spite of all competition and the *vomito;* a gentle maiden, sighing for *somebody* at the end of the voyage; a staunch Scotch operative, with a wife and two children, the latter of whom made up in their little private volunteer squalls for the sea squalls we missed · and last of all, a worthy old Italian fighter, who

had gone with Napoleon through all his campaigns, and, at length, determining that war was not a thriving occupation, had pitched upon a way of making his fortune by taking a dapper little Mexican body, for his wife, and the "hatting business," as a trade.

In fact, we had on board specimens of all that active industry and fearless enterprise, which push the fortunes of our native and adopted citizens all over the world, and make our country known as much by the resistless energy of her children, as by the political liberty they enjoy at home, or which is extended to them by the protection of her flag abroad.

I commenced this voyage in low spirits, and with but a slight desire to partake of the pleasures of the cabin; but, what with charming weather and good companionship, I was soon drawn forth from my state-room, to the social table, and rarely have I passed a more agreeable time in a voyage at sea. The variety of character thus blended together, was both amusing and instructive. There were tempers to suit the grave and the gay; and when the hour came for separation, we met for the last time around the board with saddened hearts, at the contemplation of the certainty that by far the larger portion of us would meet no more, and that all were about to encounter the uncertainties of fortune in a strange country, amid prejudices, disease, and revolutions.

LETTER II.

VERA CRUZ.

You left me in sight of land—on soundings—with the Peak of Orizaba in full view, and although we presumed it highly probable that we would make our harbor before evening, yet were we disappointed. The wind became baffling toward noon, and notwithstanding our captain was a brave man and stanch seaman, he determined, at nightfall, to avoid running close in with the shore, and therefore "lay to" until daylight. Nothing could be more provoking; the city was not more than ten miles distant, and the lights in the houses were distinctly visible over the level sea.

With the first streak of dawn, however, all was bustle on deck, and the topsails spread to the morning breeze. Day broke gloriously over the sea; our colors were run up; the ship headed for the harbor; and when within a mile or two of the castle, a pilot came on board. Our first inquiry was as to the yellow fever—our next, as to the revolution. Of the first disease there were no remains, and the latter had terminated in the political death of Bustamante.

At eight o'clock we moored under the walls of the Castle of St. Juan de Ulloa; and in an hour afterward, with umbrellas spread to protect us from the scorching *November* sun, we landed on the quay which has for so many years poured out the wealth of Mexico.

Vera Cruz lies on a low, sandy shore, extending for miles along the coast. I will not trouble you with the details of this city's history, famous as the spot where thousands have come to die of the *vomito*—or, to make their fortunes (if they survive the certain attack of that disease,) and return with shattered constitutions to colder climates, to ache in memory of the heat they endured in Mammon's service.

Landing at the Moletta, the *first* thing that struck me was a gang of more than a hundred galley-slaves, chained, and at work in the broiling sun, cutting and carrying stone to repair the broken pier. The *second* was the roofs of the churches, which seemed to be covered with mourning, as I supposed for some deceased prelate. The mourning turned out, however, to be nothing more than thousands of zopilotes or turkey-buzzards, the chief of which is usually perched on the peak of the cross of the loftiest church—a sentinel for prey! These two classes of folks, to wit: the galley-slaves and zopilotes, constitute a large part

of the most useful population of Vera Cruz—the former being the city authorities' laborers, the latter the city authorities' scavengers. It is a high crime to kill a zopilote. He is under the protection of the laws, and walks the streets with as much nonchalance and as "devil-may-care" a look as other "gentlemen in black," who pick the sins from our souls as these creatures pick impurities from the streets.

The *Mole*, or quay, is of good masonry and furnished with stairs and cranes for the landing of goods, though from the great violence of the ocean during the *Northers*, and the great neglect of proper repairs, it is likely to be entirely ruined. In heavy weather the sea makes a clear breach over it; yet this, and the Castle of San Juan on a land-spit near a mile off, are the only protections for the shipping of all nations and the commerce of more than half the Republic!

Passing from the Mole you enter the city by an unfinished gateway, near which Santa Anna lost his leg during the attack of the French in 1838. Beyond this portal is a large square, which will be surrounded with custom-house buildings—though there is now scarce a symptom of them except in the granite stones, most of which have been imported from the United States. From this spot, a short walk to the left leads you to the arcade of a street, and you soon find yourself in the public square of the city, which, though small in its dimensions, is neat and substantial. On the east, north, and west, it is bounded by noble ranges of edifices, built over light arches—the one to the eastward, with its back to the sea, being the former Governor's residence, and still appropriated to the civil and military purposes of the State. On the south of the square is the parish church, with its walls blackened with sea-damps and zopilotes.

The streets of Vera Cruz, crossing each other at right angles, are well paved with smooth pebbles, and the side-walks are covered with a cement resembling *brescia*. The houses, in general, are exceedingly well constructed to suit the climate, and though not of very imposing architecture, yet with their flat roofs, parti-colored awnings and display of women and flowers from their balconied windows, make the city both cool and picturesque. Upon the whole, I must confess that I have seen worse looking cities than Vera Cruz, even in the "picture-land" of Italy; and when, from the roofs of the dwellings, I look at the open sea in front, the exceedingly clean streets, and the desolate coast of sand and stunted shrubbery, which extends north and south as far as the eye can reach, I am at a loss to know why it is so cursed with disease. St. Augustine, St. Mary's, and a hundred places along our southern sea-coast, have infinitely more the appearance of nests for malaria.

It is said, that in the early period of the history of this country, Vera Cruz was not so sickly as of late years, and that, although there were occasional attacks of violent fever, it was not until 1699 that the Black Vomit made its appearance. In that year an English vessel arrived in the port with a cargo of slaves, and with them came this fatal disease. The Spanish chronicles of the town, of that date, give the most fright-

ful pictures of its outbreak and of the heroism with which the priests (especially the Jesuits,) devoted themselves to the ill and dying; and the father Francisco Xavier Alegre dwells with pleasure on the self-sacrifice with which his holy brethren met the fell monster and ministered to the wants of the sufferers.

It was entirely too warm, even in this middle of November, to stir out of the house with satisfaction. We therefore dressed ourselves in summer apparel, and took an excellent dinner very quietly, resolved not to expose our persons unnecessarily, as we understood there had been recent cases of vomito. A number of gentlemen called to see us, and I found the Governor and other officers exceedingly anxious to afford us all the protection in their power on the road to Mexico. They say that the country has been lately scoured by troops of dragoons, but that it is still infested with robbers; and, although we are to have a military escort, our friends appear to intimate that Colt's revolving pistols, double-barrelled guns, and a stock of resolution and coolness, will be our best safeguards. We have, therefore, taken the stage which will depart four days hence; and as we are amply prepared with arms and ammunition, and a number of determined passengers, I trust we shall reach the capital without having our noses stamped in the ground after the most approved fashion of the Ladrones.

At sunset, a countryman was so good as to call for us to walk with him to the *Alameda*. We sallied from the south gate, and took our way into a desolate and melancholy country. On every side were marks of solitude and misery. The ruins of houses and churches, filled with weeds and creepers; neglected fields, overgrown with aloes and made still more sad by the long pensile branches of the solitary palm; and, over all lay the dark shadows of evening, as the last rays of the sun fell aslant on the stagnant pools. A sergeant was drilling a few recruits to the tap of the drum. The music seemed to be a dead march, and the step of the soldiers was slow and solemn. Nothing could be more dreary —more heart-sickening. We loitered on, like the rest of folks, but there was no liveliness—no spirit. The people were not cheerful and joyous as when abroad with us for an evening's promenade, but strolled along in silent pairs, as if oppressed by the sadness of the melancholy wastes on the one side, and the cold, dreary, illimitable sea on the other.

The appropriate termination of this walk through the ruined *Alameda*, was the burying-ground. As we reached it, a funeral had just entered, and in the chapel they were saying some annual service for the dead! It may be wrong to indulge in such emotions, but here there really seems to be an utter *hopelessness in death*. We love to think, that when it falls

to our lot to share the common fate of humanity, we shall, at least, repose near our kindred and friends, in some beautiful spot, where those we have loved shall moulder beside us, until the dust we cherished in life shall be as blent as were the spirits that animated it. We love to think that our graves will not be solitary or unvisited. But, on this dismal shore, where the Shadow of Death for ever hangs over the prospect, the grave is not a resting-place, even for tired spirits, and the soul seems to perish as well as the body!

* * * * * *

I came home with as capital a "fit of the *blues*" as ever was born in London of a gloomy November day and a melancholy temper; and I must confess that I passed the night somewhat nervously. What with the heat and exercise, our bodies were rather tired; but what with the vomito, the sad walk, and a little excitability, I do not remember to have slept a wink. In addition to these annoyances, there was a continual hubbub in the square under our windows all night long. First of all, the guard was to be set, and that produced drumming, fifing, braying of trumpets, and bustle of troops; next, my bed was too short for me; then, just as I was coaxing myself into a doze, I discovered that the servant had neglected to put down the net, and consequently, came the onset of a colony of thirsty mosquitos, ravenous for the fresh blood of a foreigner, after having dulled their beaks a whole season on Mexican skins; next, the clock on the opposite tower struck *every* quarter, and that was backed, with equal regularity, by the watchman under the *portales*, who prefaced his song with an "Ave Maria Purissima" that would have waked the dead. And thus from hour to hour I tossed and tumbled, while the clock struck, the watchmen howled, and the mosquitos sucked—occasionally *amusing myself* by *trying* to feel some of the symptoms of the vomito! But day at length broke, and a cold bath and a hearty breakfast perfectly reëstablished me.

One of my fellow-travellers who was anxious to avoid the risk of waiting in Vera Cruz for the diligence, informed me about ten o'clock, that he had made arrangements for a "*litera*" to carry him to Xalapa, there to await the stage and rejoin our party. He was so good as to offer me a part of his couch, which I eagerly accepted, and immediately set to work packing my extra luggage for the Arrieros, as the diligence, and the muleteers who accompany *literas*, will carry but a limited burden. At four the litera arrived, but the muleteers would allow but one passenger! There was nothing but submission. Pancho had his bundles strapped on, stepped into his vehicle, or rather stretched, out on its bed, lighted his cigar, tied on a Guayaquil *sombrero*, and waved us farewell.

A *litera* is an article of rather curious conveyance. Here is a drawing of it. The pencil speaks better to the mind than any description I

can give you of it. It would create a sensation in Broadway, and is decidedly more picturesque and comfortable than a cab or an omnibus.

LITERA.

I send you some interesting tables as to the health and moisture of Vera Cruz, which I have compiled from accurate sources.

ACCOUNT OF THE BAPTISMS AND BURIALS IN VERA CRUZ FOR 1841.

	Males.	Fem.	Tot.		Total
Baptisms	214	240	454	Marriages	37

DEATHS.

	Males.	Fem.	Tot.		Males.	Fem.	Tot.
In the Parroquia	215	271	486	Hospital of Loreto	000	146	146
Hospital of St. Sebastian	254	000	254	Hosp. of S. Carlos	131	000	131
Total					600	417	1017

AGES.

	Males.	Fem.	Tot.		Males.	Fem.	Tot.
From 1 to 7	94	135	229	From 26 to 50	249	132	381
" 8 to 15	32	36	68	" 51 to 75	35	23	58
" 16 to 25	188	85	273	" 76 to 100	2	6	8

DISEASES.

	Males.	Fem.	Tot.		Males.	Fem.	Tot.
Vomito	120	36	155	Diabetes	1	0	1
Small Pox	64	78	142	Epilepsy	1	0	1
Fevers	98	44	142	Marasmus	0	1	1
Phthisis and Diarrhœa	151	61	212	Leprosy	0	1	1
Convulsions	39	11	50	Aneurism	0	2	2
Apoplexy	10	7	17	Abscess	3	1	4
Dysentery	7	22	29	Dropsy	10	9	19
Cholic	3	7	10	Ulcers	4	0	4
Pulmonia	3	5	8	Flow of Blood	0	2	2
Pleurisy	3	2	5	Child-birth	0	12	12
Asthma	0	4	4	Drowned	1	0	1
Causas	1	2	3	Contusions	0	1	1
Gangrene	7	5	12	Wounds	7	0	7
Inflammation	3	6	9	Diseases of children	63	99	162
Cholera (glacial)	1	0	1				
Total					600	417	1017

Thus, allowing the population of Vera Cruz to be about 6,500 (which I consider quite liberal,) you will perceive that one-sixth of the whole died in the course of the year; of this, one-sixth—about an equal proportion—perished from *vomito*. The excess of burials over baptisms is 563. Diarrhœa, dysentery and vomito are the most fatal maladies. In 1842, I am told that near 2000 died of vomito in Vera Cruz. This, however, was owing to the number of raw troops sent there from the interior, to be embarked for Yucatan. It is to be regretted, that I have no data from which I can inform you what is the relative proportion of the deaths among natives and foreigners, and of those who visit Vera Cruz from the interior. It has struck me, nevertheless, that this document will be interesting to medical readers.

It will be observed from the following table, that the amount of water which has fallen in each year, very far exceeds the quantity known to fall annually in any part of the United States. With us it scarcely exceeds four feet. It is not, however, difficult to account for the difference. Vera Cruz, situated at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, backed by a lofty range of mountains rising beyond the limits of perpetual congelation, must necessarily be the recipient of the immense body of water held in solution by the hot intertropical air, and which is constantly carried along by the trade-winds, to be condensed against the cold mountains. This will sufficiently account for the fact; although we were far from being prepared to expect its nature and extent to be such as is here stated.

	Feet. Inch.	
In the year 1822 there fell,	13, 1.5	in the 12 months.
1823	15, 8.9	"
1824	10, 8.1	"
1825	10, 7.1	"
1826*	5, 4.4	"
1827	21, 2.8	10
1828	12, 2.0	12
1829	23, 2.3	"
1830	18, 0.0	"

* This year was remarkably dry; and was moreover characterized by universally severe weather upon the coast, and a great destruction of shipping property.

LETTER III.

THE RIDE TO XALAPA, AND THE ROBBERS WE MET ON THE ROAD.

DURING the last two days of our stay at Vera Cruz, it blew a Norther. The wind was high, and made it impossible for ships to enter the port. We spent the last afternoon at the water-gate of the city, watching the waves as they spent their fury on the Mole; and the ships, anchored under the lee of the Castle, tugging at their cables like impatient coursers struggling to get loose. With these fine adjuncts of marine scenery, and the low brooding clouds of the stormy sky, I have never beheld a scene more worthy of the pencil of our countryman, Birch.

After supper we made our final preparations for departure. Trunks were strapped on the diligence, old and warmer clothing put on, and, at midnight, nine of us got into the American Coach for our journey to the Capital.

The stories of numerous robberies, and the general insecurity of the road, had been dinned into our ears ever since we arrived. Scarcely a diligence came in that did not bring accounts of the levying of contributions. Before we left the United States, many friends who had visited this country, warned me of my danger, and,advising me to prepare myself with a couple of Colt's revolvers, hoped that I might reach the Capital in safety.

Now, for my own part, though not disposed to be rash on any occasion, I always received these tales "*cum grano.*" But I nevertheless took the precaution to load my double-barrelled gun with large buckshot. S. prepared his double-barrelled rifle and a Colt's pistol with four discharges. J. took his Manton and horse-pistols. Another person had a pair of pocket-irons, and ground an old fashioned dress sword to a *very* sharp point. John, the servant, loaded a pistol and blunderbuss for the box; and thus, harnessed and equipped, we sallied at midnight from the court-yard, as resolved as any men who ever went on feudal foray, to kill the first ill-looking miscreant who poked a hostile nose in our coach windows. By way, however, of making ourselves *perfectly* secure, and of passing the night with additional comfort, I took care, as soon as we were seated, to point my own weapon out of the window, and to see that my companions had their arms in such positions that if they did "go off," there would be no harm done, at least to the passengers.

It was very dark when we issued from the gates of the city, where our passports were demanded. Accustomed, of late years, to the unmolested travelling of our Union, I had put mine at the bottom of the trunk, and

forgot all about the necessity of having it in my pocket. The drowsy guard, however, took my word for the fact that I had one, and permitted us to pass on.

A warm, drizzling rain was pattering down, driven in by the Norther which was still raging and dashing the sea in long surges on the sandy beach along which our road lay for several miles. We could see nothing; the way soon became almost impassable through the deep sand, though our heavy coach was drawn by eight horses; and proposing that the curtains should be let down, at least on my side, I was soon in a profound sleep, nor did I awake until near sunrise as we were passing the estate of Santa Anna, at Manga de Clavo. His *hacienda* was in the distance, to the right of the road, and appeared to be a long, low edifice, buried among forests, but without those signs of improvement and cultivation which make the property of our great landholders so picturesque. He owns an immense body of land in this neighborhood, lying for *leagues* along the road, but all seemed as barren and unattractive as the wildernesses of our far west.

During the night, an escort of three troopers had joined us at Boccherone. At daylight I caught sight of them, for the first time, in their long yellow cloaks, trotting along behind us on their small but tough and trusty horses. They were three as poor looking wretches as I ever saw: one of them appeared to be just out of a fit of fever; the other a little the worse for an extra cup of *aguardiente;* and the third, as though he had just recovered from a month's chattering of the ague.

The road thus far had been tolerably good, although much cut up by the recent passage of baggage-wagons and trains of artillery. About seven o'clock we halted at the village of Manantial for breakfast. It is the usual stopping-place for the diligence, and we were of course immediately supplied with chocolate and biscuit. Our servitor was the Padrone's wife; and I could not help remarking her extreme beauty, and the musical sweetness of her voice, as she attended at the counter of her hut. Her Spanish was almost as liquid as Italian, and as soft as her eyes.

The houses in this part of Mexico are mostly built of split bamboos, set upright in the ground, with a steep roof, thatched with palm-leaves, and prepared of course, to admit freely the sun, wind and rain, which, during the season, is sufficiently abundant. Upon the whole, they are very respectable and picturesque *chicken-coops*.

Here our guard quitted us. It seems, notwithstanding the written orders and promise I had from the commandant at Vera Cruz for an escort, that these fellows had received no directions to accompany us, and had only ridden thus far because they thought the new Minister of Finance, Señor Trigueros, was in the stage. But I can scarcely think they were a loss. While my companions were finishing their *lunch*, I took occasion to examine their arms, not looking, however, at more than one carbine, and that I found had lost the catch of its cock, which of course always lay against the covering of the pan, pressing it open. I

mentioned this to the trooper, and asked him where he put the powder? "There, to be sure," said he, pointing to the pan. "And how do you fire it?" "Pshaw," replied the fellow, staggering off—"'tis *better* so." He was half drunk, and as ridiculous as his weapon. If these are the soldiers of Mexico, they hardly rise to the dignity of respectable scare-crows.

We were soon called to coach, and mounting our vehicle with better spirits for the refreshment and morning air, we shortly entered a rolling country, with an occasional ruinous hamlet and plantation. Although the scenery was in spots exceedingly romantic, interspersed with upland and valley, and covered with a profusion of tropical trees and flowers, there was over the whole an air of abandonment which could not fail to strike one painfully. In a new country, as a traveller passes by a solitary bridle-path, over the plains and hills, hidden by the primeval forests fresh as they came from Nature's hand, there is matter for agreeable reflection, in fancying what the virgin soil will produce in a few years when visited by industry and taste. But here, Nature instead of being pruned of her luxuriance with judicious care, has been literally sapped and exhausted, and made old even in her youth, until she again begins to renew her empire among *ruins*. It is true, that traces of old cultivation are yet to be found, and also the remains of a former dense population. The sides of the hills, in many places, as in Chili and Peru, are cut into terraces; but over those plains and slopes is spread a wild growth of mimosas, cactus, and acacias, while a thousand flowering parasite-plants trail their gaudy blossoms among the aloes and shrubbery which fill up the rents of time and neglect in the dilapidated buildings. It is the picture of a beauty, prematurely old, tricked out in all the fanciful finery of youth!

We wound along among these silent hills until about ten o'clock, when a rapid descent brought us to the National Bridge, built by the old Spanish Government, and enjoying then the sounding title of *Puente del Rey*. Changed in name, it has not, however, changed in massive strength, or beauty of surrounding scenery. Indeed, the neglect of cultivation, has permitted Nature to regain her power, and the features of the scenery are therefore more like those of some of the romantic ravines of Italy, where the remains of architecture and the luxuriant products of the soil are blent in wild and romantic beauty.

The Puente Nacional spans the river *Antigua*, which passes over a rocky bed in a deep dell of high and perpendicular rocks. The adjacent heights of this mountain pass have been strongly fortified during the wars; among their fastnesses and defiles the revolutionary generals lay concealed in Iturbide's time, and finally descended from them to conclude the fight in favor of independence.

At Puente, there is a village containing the usual number of comfortable cane huts, before which the neighboring Indians had spread out for sale their fruits and wares; while the Mexicans (as it was Sunday) were amusing themselves by gambling at *monté* for *clacos*. At the inn a break-

fast of eggs and frijoles was prepared for us. The eggs, the beans, the bread, and a bottle of tolerable claret went down famously, with the seasoning of our mountain appetites; but I cannot say as much for the stew of mutton and fish fresh from the river. What with onions, and lard, and garlic, and chilé peppers, I never tasted such a mess. We unanimously resolved to leave it as a precious *bonne bouche* for some Spanish successors, to whose bowels such a compound may be more savory than to North Americans.

Having dispatched this collation, we again mounted the diligence. I had seen an officer in command of some cavalry at the door of our inn, and recollecting that the succeeding post is represented to be one of the most dangerous on the route, I told our Yankee driver that I thought he might as well take my order for the escort, and a bundle of cigars, and try their effect upon the military. Whether it was the order or the Principés I am unable to say, but four dragoons were immediately mounted for our service. If the odor of that offspring of the "Vuelta de Abajo" still floats in the memory of the Lieutenant, and a well-supplied traveller happens hereafter to pass the Puente Nacional while *he* is in command, let me suggest that a similar gift may be received as thankfully and effectively. When our driver cracked his whip, and the horses sprang off from the *lassos* of the grooms at full gallop, the "bold dragoon" stood with cap in hand, and I could catch a glimpse of a head bowing most gracefully in the midst of a cloud of fragrant smoke.

Our route westward to *Plan del Rio* was through a mountainous country of short and gradual ascents, in most of its characteristics resembling the one we had passed over during our morning ride. At length, a steep descent over a road as smooth as a bowling-green brought us to the village of Plan. The guard trotted after us leisurely; the day had become cloudy and the scenery dreary, and the fear of robbers among these solitary wildernesses again came over us. We felt, indeed, more anxiety than since our departure.

Mine host at Plan del Rio received us warmly, though his house was as cold and uninviting as the day. He speedily produced a smoking dinner of fowls and rice, to which I found myself able to do but little justice. But the dinner had been served—we had tasted it—a bottle of claret had been drunk, and though our appetites had been frugal, the *nine* of us were obliged to pay two dollars each for the service! The two fowls which made the stew, cost, at the most, a *real* each; the rice as much; the salad grew for the planting, and the claret stood our host about seventy-five cents the bottle: so, for what, with service and cooking and original cost, taxed our Padrone not more than three dollars at the extreme, he had the modest assurance to charge our coach-load *eighteen!* If this statement will induce any of our enterprising Yankee boys, who are whittling sticks for want of knowing how to turn an honest penny, to come out to Plan del Rio and set up an "Opposition Stage-House," I wish them joy of their undertaking. It absolutely requires, as I have shown, no capital worth men-

tioning, besides a table, a dozen chairs, knives, plates and forks, a few strings of Weathersfield onions, and flexibility of limbs and countenance to grace the thousand shrugs, apologies, compliments, humbug and grimaces necessary to make a successful innkeeper in a Spanish country.

At Plan our guard left us—as the lieutenant's command extended no farther. Our host of the flexible face and productive cookery, insisted that there was not *much* danger, besides which there were no troops on the station; so he bowed us to the coach door, and declared for the fiftieth time that he had been delighted to see us, hoped we would not fail to call again if we returned, and assured us that he only kept a few *choice bottles of his claret* for such "caballeros" as we were!

What with sour wine, sour spirits, and imposition, I doubt much if there was ever an angrier coach-load on any highway. We were effectually ill-tempered, and we looked to our primings with the full disposition to defend ourselves nobly. It would have fared ill with any one who had ventured to attack us during our first hour's ride. In addition to this, our road, as soon as it left the river, ascended rapidly and passed over a track which would in any other country be called the bed of a mountain stream, so rough and jagged was its surface. Although it is the duty of the Government to keep this highway in order, yet as the chief travelling is on horseback, and the principal part of merchandise is transported on mules, no one cares how these animals get along. Sure-footed and slow, they toil patiently among the rents and rocks, and their drivers are too well used to the inconveniences to complain. Besides this, in case of insurrections, it is better for the roads to be in bad condition, as it prevents easy communication between the several parts of Mexico, and the disjointed stones serve to form, as they have often done, breastworks and forts for the insurgents.

But over this mass of ruin we were obliged to jolt in the ascent of the mountain, during the whole afternoon, meeting in the course of it fifty wagons laden with heavy machinery for factories near Mexico.

I must not forget to mention one redeeming spot in the gloomy evening. On looking back as we were near the summit of the mountain, I caught a glimpse of the plains and hills over which we had been all day toiling. The view was uninterrupted. Before us lay valley upon valley, in one long graceful descending sweep of woodland and meadow, until they dwindled away in the sands to the east, and the whole was blent, near the horizon, with the blue waves of the Gulf of Mexico. Just then the sun broke out from the region of clouds which we were rapidly approaching in our ascent, and gilding, for a moment, the whole lowland prospect, I could almost fancy I saw the sparkle of the wave crests as they broke on the distant and barren shore.

At the village on the mountain we could get no guard. This is said to be a very dangerous pass; but the commanding officer told us he had been stationed here for two weeks, during which he had scoured the mountains in every direction, and believed his district to be free from robbers.

Cigars would not avail us this time! His men were tired and he could give no escort.

Night soon fell dark and coldly around us. In these elevated regions the air is cold and nipping; but we dared not put down our coach curtains for fear of an attack. We therefore donned our cloaks and overcoats, and laid our guns and pistols on the window-frames. John, the old gray hero, was on the look-out, with his blunderbuss, from the box, and the driver promised to have an eye to windward.

Thus we jolted on again, at times almost stalled, and, in sudden smooth descents, swinging along with a rapidity in the dark and moonless night, that seemed to threaten our destruction among the rocks. Six, seven, eight, and half-past eight o'clock passed, and no robbers appeared, though there had been several false alarms. The road became worse and worse, the coach heaving over the stones like a ship in a head sea, and the driver being obliged to descend from his seat and *feel* for the track. We saw lights passing over the heath in many places, and it was *surmised* they might be the signal lights of robbers. After due consultation, it was determined *that they were!* As we approached them they proved to be fire-flies! We felt for our percussion-caps and found them all right, and, at that moment, the coach was brought to a dead halt in the blackest looking ravine imaginable.

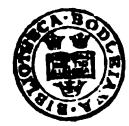
"A *mighty* bad road, sir," said John, from the box, cocking his blunderbuss. Its click was ominous, and we were at once on the alert. "There is *something black*—on horseback—just ahead of us," added he. A whistle among the bushes. Crack went the whip unmercifully over the mules, and at ten paces in advance, up rose "the *something black*," and away trotted *three cows!*

I confess to a little anxiety as I cocked my gun after John spoke of the "*something black*." It is enough to make one a little nervous, boxed up with nine in a coach, on a dark night, on a bad road, to be shot at by "*something black*." But when the danger turns out to be a peaceful cow, one feels quite as ridiculous as he had before felt nervous. As we had indulged in enough of that sort of excitement, I uncocked my gun, put the muzzle out of the window, and, keeping a finger on the trigger, resigned myself to a nap in the corner.

Jolts, pitches, tosses, nothing, woke me, until a rough voice bellowed in my ear: "There they are!" I was aroused in a moment, and moving my thumb to cock my gun, I found myself disarmed. The coach was at a halt, and strange voices and lights were around it.

It was a minute before I could shake off the oppression of my deep slumber and found that my neighbor had quietly pilfered my gun during my sleep, and that we were waiting while the guard at the *garita* of Xalapa examined our way-bill!

In a few moments we were again *en route*, and at half-past nine rolled into the court-yard of an excellent inn at Xalapa, where a good meal that served both for dinner and supper, seasoned the joke of my dextrous robbery.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CITY OF XALAPA.

LETTER IV.

XALAPA AND PEROTE.

When the Neapolitans speak to you of their beautiful city, they call it, "a piece of heaven fallen to earth;"* and tell you to "see Naples *and die!*"

It is only because so few travellers extend their journey to Xalapa and describe its scenery, that it has not received something of the same extravagant eulogium. I regret exceedingly that my stay was so limited as not to allow an opportunity of beholding the beautiful views around the city, under the influence of a serene sky and brilliant sun.

The town has about ten thousand inhabitants, and is, in every respect, the reverse of Vera Cruz; high, healthy, and built on almost precipitous streets, winding, with curious crookedness, up the steep hill-sides. This perching and bird-like architecture makes a city picturesque—although its highways may be toilsome to those who are not always in search of the romantic.

The houses of Xalapa are not so lofty as those of Vera Cruz, and their exteriors are much plainer; but the inside of the dwellings, I am told, is furnished and decorated in the most tasteful manner. The hotel in which we lodged was an evidence of this; its walls and ceilings were papered and painted in a style of splendor rarely seen out of Paris.

Before breakfast we strolled to the Convent of St. Francisco, an immense pile of buildings of massive masonry, and apparently bomb-proof. The church is exceedingly plain, but there is a neat and tasteful garden with a lofty wall. This convent also possesses a court-yard of about one hundred feet square, with an arcade of two stories, the upper part of which contains a series of spacious cells; but the whole edifice has a ruined appearance, having once been converted into a cavalry barrack, where the bugle as often sounded the morning call as the bell summoned to matins.

From the top of this conventual edifice there is a fine view of Xalapa and its vicinity. We could see the town straggling up its steep and irregular streets; but much of the adjacent scenery, and especially those two grand objects in the descriptions of all travellers, the Peak of Orizaba and the Coffre of Perote, were entirely obscured by a cloud of mist which hung around the valley in a silvery ring, inclosing the ver-

* "*Un pezzo de cielo caduto in terra.*"

dure of the glade like an emerald. The vapor, rising from the sea, driven inland by the northern winds, here first strikes the mountains; and, lodging in rain and mist and dew among the cliffs, preserves that perennial green which covers this teeming region with constant freshness and luxuriance. Xalapa is consequently a "damp town," yet it enjoys a great reputation for salubrity. It is now the best season of the year; but scarcely a day passes without rain, while the thermometer ranges from 52° to 76°, according to the state of the clouds and winds. As soon as the mountains have discharged their vapors, the sun blazes forth with a fierceness and intensity, increased by the reflection from every hill, into the town, as to a focus.

Yet I saw enough to justify all the praises even of extravagant admirers. Its society is said to be excellent, and its women are the theme of the poets throughout the republic. As I descended from the top of St. Francisco and wended my way to the hotel, I met numbers of the fair *doncellas* lounging homeward from early mass. The stately step, the liquid eye, the pale yet brilliant cheek, and an indescribable look of tenderness, complete a picture of beauty rarely matched in northern climes, and elsewhere unequalled in Mexico.

After dispatching our breakfast, for which we paid (together with our night's lodging and dinner) the sum of *four dollars*, we mounted the diligence at 10 o'clock, prepared as usual for the robbers, and set out for Perote.

In driving from the town we passed through the public square; and in the market which is held there I first saw in perfection the profuse quantity of tropical fruits (and especially the *chirimoya*, and *granadita*,) for which Xalapa is renowned. The market is supplied by the numerous small cultivators from the neighborhood, the females of whom bear a resemblance to our Northern Indians, which is perhaps even stranger and more remarkable than that of the men.

Maiz, the great staff of life for biped and quadruped in our western world, is chiefly used in the *tortilla* cakes of which we hear so much from Mexican travellers.

The sellers of these tough, buckskin victuals, sit in lines along the curb of the side-walks with their fresh cakes in baskets covered with clean napkins to preserve their warmth. There they wait patiently for purchasers; and as *tortillas*, with a little *chilé*, or, red pepper boiled in lard, are indispensable at least twice a day for the mass of the people, they are quite sure of a ready sale.

With the great mass of Mexicans there is no such thing as domestic cookery. The laborer sallies forth with his *clacos* in his pocket, and two or three of them will purchase his cakes from an Indian woman. A few steps further on, another Indian woman has a pan boiling over a portable furnace, and containing the required *beans* or chilé. The hungry man squats down beside the seller—makes a breakfast or dinner table of his knees—holds out his *tortilla* spread flat on his hand for a ladle of *chilé*

MAKING TORTILIAS.

and a lump of meat—then doubles up the edges of the cake sandwich fashion, and so on until his appetite is satisfied. He who is better off in the world, or indulges occasionally in a little extravagance, owns a *clay platter*. Into this he causes his frijoles, or *chilé* and meat, to be thrown, and making a spoon of his *tortilia*, gradually gets possession of his food, and terminates his repast by eating the spoon itself! There is great economy in this mode of housekeeping, which recommends itself, especially, to the tastes of old bachelors. There are no dishes to be washed —no silver to be cleaned, or cared for. Your Indian—flings down his *clacos*—stretches himself to his full height—gives a valedictory grunt of satisfaction over a filled stomach—and is off to his labor.

Thus wonderful is the frugality not only of the humbler classes, but, indeed, of almost all who have come under my observation in Spanish America. Whether this frugality is a virtue or the result of indolence, it is not necessary for me to stop to enquire. The reader may draw his own conclusions. But all classes are content with less physical comfort than the inhabitants of other countries. Their diet is poor, their lodging miserable, their clothing coarse, inelegant and inadequate for the climate; and yet, when the energies and intelligence of the very people who seem so supine are called into action, few men manifest those qualities in a higher degree. Let me, as an illustration, notice the ARRIEROS, or common carriers of the country, by whom almost all the transportation of the

most valuable merchandise and precious metals is conducted. They form a very large proportion of the population, yet, by no similar class elsewhere are they exceeded in devoted honesty, punctuality, patient endurance, and skillful execution of duty. Nor is this the less remarkable when we recollect the country through which they travel—its disturbed state—and the opportunities consequently afforded for transgression. I have never been more struck with the folly of judging of men by mere dress and physiognomy, than in looking at the Arrieros. A man with wild and fierce eyes, tangled hair, slashed trowsers, and greasy jerkin that has breasted many a storm—a person, in fact, to whom you would scarcely trust an old coat when sending it to your tailor for repairs—is frequently in Mexico, the guardian of the fortunes of the wealthiest men for months, on toilsome journies among the mountains and defiles of the inner land. He has a multitude of dangers and difficulties to contend with. He overcomes them all—is never robbed and never robs—and, at the appointed day, comes to your door with a respectful salutation, and tells you that your wares or monies have passed the city gates. Yet this person is often poor, bondless and unsecured—with nothing but his fair name and *unbroken word*. When you ask him if you may rely on his people, he will return your look with a surprised glance, and striking his breast, and nodding his head with a proud contempt that his honor should be questioned, exclaim: "Soy José Maria, Señor, por veinte años Arriero de Mexico—*todo el mundo me conoce!*"

"I am José Maria, sir, I'd have you know—an Arriero of Mexico for twenty years—*every body knows me!*"

I regret, that I have been able to give only the faintest pencilling outline of Jalapa, which, with all its beauty, has doubtless hitherto been associated most nauseously in your mind with the drug growing in the neighborhood to which it has given its name.*

A beautiful scene, embracing nearly the whole of this little Eden, broke on me as we gained the summit of the last hill above the town. A dell, deep, precipitous, and green as if mossed from the margin of a woodland spring lay below me, hung on every side with orange trees in bloom and bearing, nodding palms and roses and acacias scenting the air with their fragrance, and peering out among the white walls of dwellings, convents, and steeples. In the next quarter of an hour, the mists that had been gathering around the mountains, whirled down on the peaks along which we were travelling, and as the wind occasionally drifted the vapor away, we could see around us nothing but wild plains and mountain spurs covered with volcanic *debris*, flung into a thousand fantastic forms, among which grew a hardy race of melancholy-looking pines, interspersed

* To give you an idea of the profusion of fruit in Jalapa I will state a fact. I gave a French servant a *real* (twelve and a half cents) to purchase me a few oranges, and in a short time he returned with a handkerchief bursting under the load—he had received *forty* for the money.

I told the story to a Jalapenian with surprise: "They cheated him," said he; "they should have given him nearly double the number."

ARRIEROS.

with fallen trunks, aloes and *agaves*. Thus the road gradually ascended among desolation, until we reached a height where the clouds were lodged on the mountain tops, and a cold, drizzling rain filled the air. In this disagreeable manner, travelling among the clouds, we reached the village of St. Michel, and afterward La Hoya, over a road paved with basalt. From the latter place the scenery is described as magnificent when the day is clear, and the sun is out in its brilliancy. The vapor is said to be then spread out below you like a sea, and the mountain tops and little eminences peer above it like so many islands.

We passed through the village of "Las Vigas," described by Humboldt, as the highest point on the road to Mexico. The houses in this neighborhood are of different construction from those below the mountains, and are built of pine logs, each tree furnishing but one piece of timber of four inches thickness, and the whole width of its diameter; these are hewn with the axe, and closely fitted. The floors of the dwellings are laid with the same material, and the roofs are shingled. As the houses indicate a colder climate than the one through which we have recently travelled, so does also the appearance of the people, who are hardier and more robust than the inhabitants of the plains skirting the sea.

After winding along the edge of the mountain for some hours, we obtained an occasional view of the plain of Perote, level as the ocean, and bounded by the distant mountains. The Peak of Orizaba again appeared in the southeast, while the Coffre of Perote towered immediately on our left, and, seemingly in the midst of the plain, rose the Peak of Tepiacualca. Beyond it, on the remotest horizon, was sketched the outline of the snow-capped mountains. All these plains have doubtless been the basins of former lakes; but they now appear dry and arid, and it is not easy to distinguish how far they are cultivated at the suitable season. During the summer, they present a very different prospect, and, losing the guise of a waste moor, only fit for the sportsman, put on a lively livery of cultivation and improvement, far more agreeable than the dark and thorny maguey and the wilted foliage of dwarfish trees, with which they are now mostly covered. We occasionally see the stubble of last year, but the chief agriculture is evidently carried on upon the slopes and rising ground, where the irrigation is more easy from the adjacent mountains and is not so rapidly absorbed as in the marshy flats.

We had not travelled this road without our usual dread of thieves. Our guns were constantly prepared for attack, and we kept a wary watch, although during nearly the whole day we were accompanied by a party of lancers, who clattered behind us on nimble horses. Some leagues from Perote we approached the "Barranca Seca," a noted haunt of the *ladrones;* and as we came within gunshot of the place, a band of horsemen dashed out from the ruins of an old *hacienda* on our right and galloped directly to the carriage. The mist had again come down in heavy wreaths around us, obscuring the prospect at a dozen yards distance; and the guard of troopers had fallen considerably in the rear. What

with the fog and the dread of our foes, we were somewhat startled—cocked our weapons—ordered the coach to stop—and were half out of it, when the lancers reined up at full tilt, and after a parley with the new comers, assured us that they were only an additional troop kept here for security. I questioned, and still doubt the truth of this story, as I never saw a more uncouth, or better mounted, armed and equipped set of men. Their pistols, sabres, and carbines were in the best order, and their horses stanch and fleet; but they may have composed a band of old well-known robbers, pensioned off by the Government as a guard; and willing to take regular pay from the authorities, and gratuities from travellers, as less dangerous than uncertain booty with constant risk of life.

Accompanied by these six suspicious rascals and the four lancers, we quickly passed the wild mist-covered moor, and entered the Barranca, a deep fissure worn by time and water into the plain, and overhung, on all sides by lofty trees, while the adjacent parts of the flat country are cut up into similar ravines, embowered with foliage. With all the aids of art, the thieves could not have constructed a more suitable covert; and, to add to our dismay, soon after entering the Barranca, our coach broke down!

We tramped about in the mud while the accident was repairing, and the guard and its auxiliaries scoured the pass. The quarter of a mile through which the ravine extended was literally *lined with crosses*, marking the spot of some murder or violent death. These four or five hundred *mementos mori*, seemed to convert it into a perfect graveyard; while the broken coach, the dreary day, shrouding mist, approaching night, and savage figures in the scene, made a picture more fit for a Trappist than a quiet traveller fonder of his ease than adventure.

We were, however, soon again in our vehicle, and for an hour afterward the country gradually ascended, until, at sunset, the sky cleared off and we entered Perote by a brilliant starlight.

Perote is a small town, containing not more than 2500 people. It is irregularly built; the houses are only of one low and dark story, erected around large court-yards with the strength of castles. In the middle of the town there is a large square, abundantly supplied by fountains of pure water from the neighboring hills.

The *Meson* is at the further end of the town, and incloses a spacious court-yard, around which on the ground floor (which is the only floor) are a number of brick-paved, windowless stalls, furnished with a bed, a couple of chairs, and a table. No landlord made his appearance to welcome us. We waited a considerable time in the court-yard for his attendance; but as we received no invitation, S—— and myself got possession of a consumptive-looking candle, and sallied out to hunt for lodgings. We took possession of one of the dens I have described and sent in our luggage; and carefully locking the door afterward, (as Perote is the head-quarters of villany, and the court-yard was full of unshaved, ill-looking devils wrapped up in blankets,) we left our thin tallow as evidence of our tenure.

On one side of the gateway is the *fonda*, or eating part of the establishment, where two or three women were employed cooking sundry strange looking messes. We signified our hunger, and were soon called to table. Several officers of the garrison, as well as the stage-load coming from Mexico, were there before us. The cooking had been done with charcoal, over furnaces, and the color of the cooks, their clothes, the food, and the hearth was identical; a warning, as in France, never to enter the kitchen before meals. The meats had been good, but were perfectly bedevilled by the culinary imps. Garlic, onions, grease, chilé, and God knows what of other nasty compounds, had flavored the food like nothing else in the world but Perote cookery. We tasted, however, of every dish, and that taste answered to allay appetite if not to assuage hunger; especially as the table-cloth had served many a wayfarer since its last washing, (if it had ever been washed,) and had, besides, doubtless been used for duster, (if they ever dust.) The waiter, too, was a boy, in sooty rags, who hardly knew the meaning of a plate, and had never heard of other forks but his fingers.

Disgusted, as you may well suppose we were with this supper, I did not remain long at table. We were a set of baulked, hungry men, and withal, tired and peevish. I put my face for a moment outside of the gate, to take a walk, as the night was beautiful; but S—— pulled me back again, with a hint at the notorious reputation of Perote. It was not eight o'clock, but the town was already still as death. Its population had slunk home to their cheerless dwellings, and the streets were as deserted as those of Pompeii, save where a ragged rascal now and then skulked along in the shadow of the houses, buried up in his broad-brimmed sombrero and dirty blanket.

We therefore at once retired to our cells; I threw myself on the bed wrapped in my cloak, in dread of a vigorous attack from the fleas, and slept without moving until the driver called us at midnight to start for Puebla. Being already dressed, I required no time for my toilet, and I doubt much if hair-brushes, orris tooth-powder, or the sweet savors of the Rue Vivienne, were ever thought of by a parting guest at Perote!

In half an hour we were once more in the coach galloping out of the town, followed by three dragoons furnished by the officer we had met at supper, who seemed to entertain as poor an opinion as we did of this citadel of vagabondism.

Although the sky had been clear and the stars were shining brightly when we retired to bed, a mist was now hanging in low clouds over the plain. The road was, however, smooth and level, and we scampered along nimbly, fear adding stings to our coachman's lash, inasmuch as he was the driver of a diligence that had been robbed last spring, and had received a ball between his shoulders, from the effects of which he had just sufficiently recovered to drive on his first trip since the conflict. We galloped during the whole night, stopping only for a moment to change horses; nor did we meet a living thing except a pack of jackals, that

came bounding beside the coach along the level and almost trackless plain. I never saw half so frightened a man as our coachman, especially when we passed the spot where he had been wounded. Every shrub was a robber—and a maguey of decent size was a whole troop!

The early morning, from the rain which had fallen during the night on this portion of the plain, was as cold and raw as November at home; nor was it until an hour after sunrise that the mists peeled off from the lowlands, and, folding themselves around the distant hills, revealed a prospect as bare and dreary as the Campagna of Rome.

LETTER V.

CITY OF PUEBLA.

I SHALL say nothing more of our journey from Perote to Puebla, or of the several uninteresting villages through which we passed. The road led among deep gullies, and was exceedingly dusty on the plains. The towns were usually built of the common *adobes*, or sun-dried bricks of the country, and neither in their architectural appearance, nor in the character of their inhabitants, offered any attractions for the attention of a traveller. It was, indeed, a tedious and uninteresting drive over the solitary moors, and I have seldom been more gratified at the termination of a day's fatigue than I was when we entered the gateway of our spacious and comfortable inn at Puebla. In addition to the usual discomforts of the road, we had suffered greatly from the heat during the two or three last hours of our ride, and were annoyed by a fine dust, which, heated by a blazing sun, rolled into our coach from every side, and fell like a parching powder on our skins. A bath was, therefore, indispensable before the dinner, which we found excellent after our fare of the previous night at Perote. In the afternoon I paid a visit to the governor, who promised an escort of dragoons for the rest of the journey to the Capital; and I then sallied forth, to see as much as possible of this really beautiful city.

My recollections of Puebla (comparing it now with Mexico) are far more agreeable than those of the Capital. There is an air of neatness and tidiness observable everywhere. The streets are broad, well paved with flat stones, and have a washed and cleanly look. The crowd of people is far less than in the Capital, and they are not so ragged and miserable. House rents are one-half or one-third those of Mexico, and the dwellings are usually inhabited by one family; but, churches and convents seem rather more plentiful in proportion to the inhabitants. The friars are less numerous, and the secular clergy greater.

A small stream skirts the eastern side of Puebla, affording a large water-power for manufacturing purposes. On its banks a public walk has been planted with rows of trees, among which the paths meander, while a neat fountain throws up its waters in the midst of them. The views from this retreat, in the evening, are charmingly picturesque over the eastern plain.

On the western side of Puebla lie the extensive piles of buildings belonging to the Convent of St. Francis, situated opposite the entrance of

the ALAMEDA—a quiet and retired garden walk to which the *cavaliers* and *donzellas* repair before sunset, for a drive in view of the volcanos of Istazihuatl and Popocatepetl, which bound the westward prospect with their tops of eternal snow. Near the centre of the city is the great square. It is surrounded on two sides by edifices erected on arches through which the population circulates as at Bologna. On the northern side is the Palace of the Governor, now filled with troops; and directly in front of this is the Cathedral, equal perhaps in size to that of Mexico, but, being elevated upon a platform about ten feet above the level of the square, it is better relieved and stands out from the surrounding buildings with more boldness and grandeur.

This church is, in all its details and arrangements the most magnificent in the Republic; and although not desirous to occupy your time with a description of religious edifices, yet, with a view of affording some idea of the wealth of this important establishment in a country where the priesthood is still very powerful, I will venture to remark on a few of those objects that strike the eye of a transient traveller.

It is about this Cathedral, I am told, that there is a legend of Puebla, which states that while in process of building, it gained mysteriously in height during the night as much as the masons had wrought during the day. *This was said to be the work of Angels*, and hence, the city has acquired the holy name of "Puebla de los Angeles." Be this, however, as it may, the church, though neither exactly worthy of divine conception and execution, nor a miracle of art, is extremely tasteful, and one of the best specimens of architecture I saw in Mexico. The material is blue basalt; the stones are squared by the chisel; the joints neatly pointed; and the whole has the appearance of great solidity, being supported by massive buttresses, and terminated at the west by lofty towers filled with bells of sweet and varied tones. Between the towers is the main entrance, over which there is a mass of sculpture of Scripture history in stone and moulded work.

Entering by this portal, the edifice, though lofty and extensive, has its effect greatly marred by the erections over the crypt, altar and choir, which fill the building to near its arched and elevated ceiling. As usual, the church is divided into three parts by rows of massive columns. Outside of these, under lower arches, are the side aisles, and in the wall the lesser chapels are imbedded, as it were, between columns, and screened from the main edifice by a graceful railing and fanciful gates of wrought iron. A similar rail also incloses the choir and other portions of the building; and the whole, painted green, is picked out with gilded ornaments.

From the centre of the vast dome depends the great chandelier—a weighty mass of gold and silver. It weighs *tons*. The sum at which it is valued I will not mention; but you may judge of its extent and price from the fact that, when cleaned thoroughly some years ago, the cost of its purification alone amounted to *four thousand dollars!*

The great altar, too, is a striking object. It was erected about thirty years ago by one of the bishops of Puebla, and affords the greatest display

of Mexican marbles in the Republic. The variety of colors is very great, among which is one of a pure and brilliant white, as transparent as alabaster. The rail and steps, which, of course, are of fine marble, lead to a circular platform eight or ten feet above the floor, beneath which is the sepulchre of the bishops, (constructed entirely of the most precious materials,) divided into niches and panels, and covered with a depressed dome of marble, relieved by bronze and gold circles, from the centre of which depends a silver lamp, for ever burning in the habitation of the dead.

To the right of the altar is the gem of the building. It is a figure of the Virgin Mary, nigh the size of life. Dressed in the richest embroidered satin, she displays strings of the largest pearls hanging from her neck below her knees. Around her brow is clasped a crown of gold, inlaid with emeralds of a size I had never seen before; and her waist is bound with a zone of diamonds, from the centre of which blaze numbers of enormous brilliants!

But this is not all. The candelabras surrounding the platform before the altar, are of silver and gold, and so ponderous that a strong man could neither move nor lift them. Immediately above the altar, and within the columns of the large temple erected there, is a smaller one, the interior of which is displayed or concealed by secret machinery. From this the Host, amid a blaze of priceless and innumerable jewels, is exhibited to the kneeling multitude.

The principal dome is, of course, in the centre of the church; and opposite the front of the altar is the choir, remarkable, principally, for the workmanship and preservation of the richly carved woodwork of its stalls for the canons and clergy. Above the seat of the bishop is a picture of St. Peter, formed by the inlaying of different woods; yet so skilfully is this work of art executed, that at a short distance it has all the effect and gracefulness of a painting in oil. It is to be regretted that the organ is rather too small for so large a building, and that the rich tone of the noble instrument is therefore greatly lost in the services of a church where the effect of the Catholic rite, amid so many other magnificent adjuncts, would be greatly enhanced in pomp by the perfection of solemn music.

It was too obscure to see the pictures which are said to be worthy of notice, or the three sets of valuable jewels of the bishop; and we therefore departed at dusk from this mine of wealth and splendor.

As I went out of the door in the dim twilight, and found a miserable and ragged woman kneeling before the image of a saint, and heard the hollow sounding of her breast as she beat it with penitential fervor; I could not help asking myself, if the church that subsisted upon alms, in order to be the greatest almoner of the nation, had fulfilled its sacred charge while there was one diamond in the zone of the Virgin, or one homeless or foodless wretch in the whole Republic.

LETTER VI.

THE PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.

THREE leagues westwardly from the city of Puebla lie the remains of the ancient Indian PYRAMID OF CHOLULA, and you reach them by a pleasant morning ride over the plain.

This is one of the most remarkable relics of the Aborigines on the Continent; for, although it was constructed only of the *adobes*, or common sun-dried bricks, it still remains in sufficient distinctness to strike every observer with wonder at the enterprise of its Indian builders. What it was intended for, whether tomb or temple, no one has determined with certainty, though the wisest antiquarians have been guessing since the conquest. In the midst of a plain the Indians erected a mountain. The base still remains to give us its dimensions; but what was its original height? Was it the tomb of some mighty lord, or sovereign prince; or was it alone a place of sacrifice?

Many years ago, in cutting a new road toward Puebla from Mexico, it became necessary to cross a portion of the base of this pyramid. The excavation laid bare a square chamber, built of stone, the roof of which was sustained by cypress beams. In it were found some idols of basalt, a number of painted vases, and the remains of two bodies. No care was taken of these relics by the discoverers, and they are lost to us for ever.

Approaching the pyramid from the east, it appears so broken and overgrown with trees that it is difficult to make out any outline distinctly. The view from the west, however, which I have given on the opposite page, will convey to you some idea of this massive monument as it rises in solitary grandeur from the midst of the wide-spreading plain. A well-paved road, cut by the old Spaniards, ascends from the northwest corner, with steps at regular intervals, obliquing first on the west side to the upper bench of the terrace, and thence returning toward the same side until it is met by a steep flight rising to the front of the small, dome-crowned chapel, surrounded with its grove of cypress, and dedicated to the Virgin of Remedios.

The summit is perfectly level and protected by a parapet wall, whence a magnificent view extends on every side over the level valley. Whatever this edifice may have been, the idea of thus attaining permanently an elevation to which the people might resort for prayer—or even for parade or amusement—was a sublime conception, and entitles the men who centuries ago patiently erected the lofty pyramid, to the respect of

RUINS OF THE PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.—WESTERN VIEW.

posterity. If his ancestor celebrated, here, a bloody sacrifice of victims taken in battle, the modern Indian may purify the hill from the crime by the celebration of a peaceful mass, and the sermon of a worthy padre!

There remain at present but four stories of the Pyramid of CHOLULA, rising above each other and connected by terraces. These stories are formed, as I before said, of sun-dried bricks, interspersed with occasional layers of plaster and stone work. And this is all that is to be told or described. Old as it is—interesting as it is—examined as it has been by antiquaries of all countries—the result has ever been the same. The Indians tell you that it was a place of sepulture, and the Mexicans give you the universal reply of ignorance in this country: "*Quien Sabe?*"—who knows—who can tell!

For those who are interested particularly in Mexican antiquities since the recent publications of Mr. Stephens, and the beautiful drawings of Mr. Catherwood, have greatly familiarized almost all classes with the monuments of ancient American grandeur, I will translate some of the descriptive remarks of the Baron Humboldt, who visited these ruins near the beginning of our century.

"The Pyramid of Cholula," says he, "is exactly of the same height as that of Tonatiuh Ytxaqual, at TEOTIHUACAN," (which I shall describe hereafter.) "It is 3 *mètres* higher than that of Mycerinus, or the third of the great Egyptian pyramids of the group of Djizeh. Its base, however, is larger than that of any pyramid hitherto discovered by travellers in the old world, and is *double of that known as the Pyramid of Cheops.*

"Those who wish to form an idea of the immense mass of this Mexican monument by the comparison of objects best known to them, may imagine a square, *four times greater than that of the Place Vendôme in Paris, covered with layers of bricks rising to twice the elevation of the Louvre!* Some persons imagine that the whole of the edifice is not artificial; but as far as explorations have been made, there is no reason to doubt that it is *entirely* a work of art. In its present state (and we are ignorant of its perfect original height,) its perpendicular proportion is to its base as 8 to 1, while in the three great pyramids of Djizeh, the proportion is found to be $1\frac{6}{10}$ to $1\frac{7}{10}$ to 1; or, nearly, as 8 to 5."

May not this have *been but the base* of some mighty temple destroyed long before the conquest, and of which even the tradition no longer lingers among the neighboring Indians!

In order to afford you additional means of comparison, I annex the following table, also from Humboldt, of the relative proportions of several well known pyramids.

The feet are *pieds du roi:*

	PYRAMIDS BUILT OF STONE.			PYRAMIDS OF BRICK.		
	Cheops.	Cephren.	Mycerinus.	1 of 5 stories in Egypt near Sakharah.	of 4 stories in Mexico— Teotihuacan.	Cholula
Height	448 feet.	398 feet.	162 feet	150 feet.	171 feet.	172 f
Base.	728	655	580	210	645	1355

In continuation, Humboldt observes, that "the inhabitants of Anahuac apparently designed giving the Pyramid of Cholula the same height, and double the base of the Pyramid at Teotihuacan, and that the Pyramid of Asychis, the largest known of the Egyptians, has a base of 800 feet, and is like that of Cholula, built of brick. The cathedral of Strasburg is 8 feet, and the cross of St. Peters, at Rome, 41 feet, *lower* than the top of the Pyramid of Cheops. Pyramids exist throughout Mexico; In the forests of Papantla at a short distance above the level of the sea; on the plains of Cholula and of Teotihuacan, at the elevations which exceed those of the passes of the Alps. In the most widely distant nations, in climates the most different, man seems to have adopted the same style of construction; the same ornaments, the same customs; and to have placed himself under the government of the same political institutions!"

Is this an argument that all men have sprung only from one stock? or that the human mind is the same everywhere, and, affected by similar interests or necessities invariably comes to the same result, whether in pointing a pyramid, or an arrow; in making a law, or a ladle?

Much as I distrust all the dark and groping efforts of antiquarians, I will nevertheless offer you some sketches and legends, which may serve, at least, to base a conjecture upon as to the divinity to whom this pyramid was erected; and to prove, perhaps, that it was intended as the foundation of a temple, and not the covering of a tomb.

A tradition which has been recorded by a Dominican monk who visited Cholula in 1566, is thus related from his work, by the traveller to whom I have already referred:

"Before the great inundation, which took place 4800 years after the creation of the world, the country of Auahuac was inhabited by giants, all of whom either perished in the inundation, or were transformed into fishes, save seven who fled into caverns.

"When the waters subsided, one of the giants, called Xelhua, surnamed "the Architect," went to CHOLULA, where, as a memorial of the Tlaloc* which had served for an asylum to himself and his six brethren, he built an artificial hill in the form of a pyramid. He ordered bricks to be made in the province of Tlalmanalco, at the foot of the Sierra of Cocotl, and in order to convey them to Cholula, he placed a file of men who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld, with wrath, an edifice the top of which was to reach the clouds. Irritated at the daring attempt of Xelhua, they hurled fire on the pyramid! Numbers of the workmen perished. The work was discontinued, and the monument was afterward dedicated to QUETZALCOATL."

* The mountain of Tlaloc lies in a westerly direction from the Pyramid of Cholula, about thirty miles. It was visited last year, and ascended with much difficulty by Mr. Ward and Mr. Jamieson, who found, upon the very summit, the remains of extensive walls, the sides of which were due north and south. The day was exceedingly cold, and, suffering from the keen mountain air, they were unable to extend their explorations, especially as they were not prepared either with the necessary tools, or to spend some time on the summit. They dug, however, with the blades of their swords among the ruins, and found a number of small images and heads of clay, similar to those which will be hereafter described.

Now of this god Quetzalcoatl, we have the following story, which is given by Dr. M'Culloh, the most learned and laborious of writers upon American antiquities.

"QUETZALCOATL, or the 'Feathered Serpent,' was among the Mexicans, and all other nations of Auahuac, 'GOD OF THE AIR.' He was said to have been once high priest of Tula. They figured him tall, huge, of a fair complexion, broad forehead, large eyes, long black hair and flowing beard. From a love of decency he wore always a long robe, which was represented to have been spotted all over with *red crosses*. He was so rich that he had palaces of gold, silver, and precious stones. He was thought to possess the greatest industry, and to have invented the art of melting metals, and cutting gems. He was supposed to have had the most profound wisdom, which he displayed in the laws he left to mankind, and, above all, the most rigid and exemplary manners. Whenever he intended promulgating a law to his kingdom, he ordered a crier to the top of the mountain Tzatzitepec, or '*hill of shouting;*' *near the city of Tula, from whence his voice was heard for three hundred miles. In his time the corn grew so strong that a single ear* WAS A LOAD FOR A MAN. GOURDS WERE AS LONG AS A MAN'S BODY. It was unnecessary to dye cotton, *for it grew of all colors;* all their fruits were in the same abundance, and of an extraordinary size. There was also at that period, an incredible number of beautiful and sweet-singing birds. In a word, the Mexicans imagined as much happiness under the priesthood of Quetzalcoatl, as the Greeks did under the reign of Saturn, whom this Mexican god also resembled in the exile he suffered.

"Amid all this prosperity TEZCATLIPOCA, their supreme but *visible* god, (we know not for what reason,) wishing to drive him from Tula, appeared to him in the form of an aged man, and told him it was the will of the gods that he should be taken to the kingdom of Tlapalla. At the same time he offered him a beverage, which was readily accepted, in hopes of obtaining that immortality after which he aspired. He no sooner drank it than he felt himself so strongly tempted to go to Tlapalla, that he set out at once, accompanied by many of his faithful subjects. Near the city of Quauhtitlan, he felled a tree with stones, which remained fixed in the trunk; and at Tlalnepautla he laid his hand upon a stone and left an impression which the Mexicans showed to the Spaniards. Upon his arrival at CHOLULA the citizens detained him, and made him take the government of their city. He showed much aversion to cruelty, and could not bear the mention of war. To him, the Cholulans say, they owe their knowledge of melting metals, the laws by which they were afterward governed, the rites and ceremonies of their religion, and, as some say, the arrangement of their seasons and calendar. After residing for 20 years in Cholula, he resolved to pursue his journey to his imaginary kingdom of Tlapalla, carrying along with him four noble and virtuous youths; but, on arriving at the maritime province of Coatzacoalco, he dismissed them, and desired them to assure the Cholulans that

he would return to comfort and direct them. Some said that he suddenly disappeared, others that he died on the sea-shore; but however that may be, Quetzalcoatl *was consecrated as a god by the Toltecas of Cholula, and made chief guardian of their city*, in the centre of which, in honor of him, *they raised a great eminence on which they built a temple*. Another eminence, surmounted by a temple, was afterward erected to him in Tula. From Cholula his worship was spread over the country, where he was adored as 'the god of the air.' He had temples in Mexico and elsewhere, and some nations, even the enemies of the Cholulans, had temples and priests dedicated to his worship in the city of Cholula, whither persons came from all parts of the land to pay their devotions and fulfil their vows. His festivals were great and extraordinary, especially in Cholula.

"In every fourth, or divine year, they were preceded *by a rigid fast of eighty days*, and by dreadful austerities practiced by the priests consecrated to his worship. The Mexicans said, that Quetzalcoatl cleared the way for the 'god of the water,' because in these countries rain is generally preceded by wind."

The following singular story in relation to this divinity and certain services of his temple, is to be found in the Nat. and Mor. Hist. of Acosta, book v. chap. 30.

"There was at this temple of Quetzalcoatl at Cholula, a court of reasonable greatness, in which they made great dances and pastimes with games and comedies, on the festival days of this idol; for which purpose there was in the midst of this court a theatre of thirty feet square, very finely decked and trimmed—the which they decked with flowers that day—with all the art and invention that might be, being environed around with arches of divers flowers and feathers, and in some places there were tied many small birds, conies, and other tame beasts. After dinner all the people assembled in this place, and the players presented themselves and played comedies. Some counterfeited the deaf and rheumatic; others the lame; some the blind and crippled which came to seek for cure from the idol. The deaf answered confusedly; the rheumatic coughed; the lame halted, telling their miseries and griefs, wherewith they made the people to laugh. Others came forth in the form of little beasts, some attired like snails, others like toads, and some like lizards; then meeting together they told their offices, and every one retiring to his place, they sounded on small flutes, which was pleasant to hear. They likewise counterfeited butterflies and small birds of divers colors, which were represented by the children who were sent to the temple for education. Then they went into a little forest, planted there for the purpose, whence the priests of the temple drew them forth with instruments of music. In the mean time they used many pleasant speeches, some in propounding, others in defending, wherewith the assistants were pleasantly entertained. This done, they made a masque, or mummery with all these personages, and so the feast ended."

From these traditions, we derive several important facts. First, that QUETZALCOATL, was "god of the air:" Second, that he was represented as a "feathered serpent:" Third, that he was the great divinity of the Cholulans: and, Fourth, that a hill was raised by them upon which they erected a temple to his glory, where they celebrated his festivals with pomp and splendor.

Combining all these, is it unreasonable to believe that the Pyramid of Cholula was the base of this temple, and that he was there worshipped as the Great Spirit of the air—or of the seasons; the God who produced the fruitfulness of the earth, regulated the sun, the wind and the shower, and thus spread plenty over the land? I have thought, too, that the serpent might not improbably typify *lightning*, and the feathers, *swiftness;* thus denoting one of the attributes of the air—and that the most speedy and destructive.

In a worship of *propitiation*, it would be most proper and reasonable that that destructive element should be personified and supplicated.

In the city of Mexico I constantly saw serpents, carved in stone, in the various collections of antiquities. One was presented to me by the Conde del Peñasco, and the drawings below represent the figures of two "feathered serpents," which, after considerable labor I disinterred (I may say,) from a heap of dirt and rubbish, old boxes, chicken-coops and decayed fruit, in the court-yard of the University.

These masses of stone are not only interesting on account of their connection with the Mexican Mythology, but they are beautiful specimens of Azteck art. The carving with which they are covered is executed with a neatness and gracefulness that would make them, as mere ornaments, worthy of the chisel of an ancient sculptor.

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The present town of Cholula is scarcely more than a village, and seems gradually still more decaying. At the conquest it was a city of much splendor, as we gather from the accounts of Cortez, who, in his letters to the Emperor speaks of it thus:

"This city of Churultecal* is situated on a plain, and contains *twenty thousand houses within the body of the town, and as many in the suburb.* Its people are well dressed, and its neighboring fields are exceedingly fertile; and I certify to your majesty, *that, from one of the temples I have counted more than four hundred towers, and they are all the towers of temples!*"

Such was Cholula when it fell under the Spanish sway, and there seems to be no reason to doubt, that, "sacred city" as it was held to be by the Indians of the period, the account of Cortez was indeed correct. But the temple is year after year crumbling, more and more, to decay; its outlines are becoming more and more indistinct; and of the race that worshipped on that pyramid, there now remains nothing but a few servile Indians who till the adjacent fields, and the women who throng the market-place with their fruits and flowers. I wanted some relics of the spot, and commissioning a proud-looking fellow, who may have been, for aught I know, a great great-great-great-grandson of some of the lords of Cholula, to hunt up a few antiquities; he brought me, after an hour's search among the ruins a quantity of pottery, heads of animals, fragments of vases, and a smal idol sculptured in white marble. These are my souvenirs of Cholula.

* The ancient name of Cholula.

LETTER VII.

LAST DAY'S RIDE TO MEXICO.

Soon after our departure from Puebla,* we crossed a small stream spanned by a fine bridge, and commenced ascending by a very gradually inclined plain toward the Sierra Nevada. The mountains on our left are a stupendous range, standing out sharply against the bright blue sky, in the clear early light and pure atmosphere, their lower portions covered with dark pine forests, from which the conic peak of Popocatepetl, with its eternal snow, emerges majestically; while, further north, towers its gigantic rival, Iztaccihuatl. Between us and the mountains is the Pyramid of Cholula. As we approach this elevated region, the country becomes well watered, and the plain is just sufficiently inclined for irrigation; the soil rich, the estates extensive, and cultivated with the greatest care. Immense herds of cattle are spread over the fields, and the land, now preparing for the winter crops, is divided into extensive tracts of a thousand acres, along which the furrows are drawn with mathematical accuracy. Among these noble farms a multitude of habitations are scattered, which, inclosing the numerous population necessary for labor, with the requisite chapels, churches, and surrounding offices, gleam out brightly with their white walls from among the dark foliage of the groves, and impress one as favorably as the multitude of tasteful villages that dot the windings of our beautiful Connecticut.

We breakfasted hastily at San Martin, and for the next league our ascent was almost imperceptible. At length we crossed several fine streams, and the road, rising rapidly, struck more into the mountain. There was no longer any sign of cultivation, even in the dells, but the

* It is not over two or three hundred yards from the gates of Puebla, where most of the robberies of which I afterward heard during my residence in Mexico, occurred. A band of some five, ten, or a dozen men, armed, with their faces covered with crape, usually stood waiting in the early dawn, for the diligence. If there were *armed foreigners* in the coach, they would look in, consult a moment, and then ride off. If the passengers were unarmed, and the boot of the vehicle looked heavy and tempting, the result was the perfect sacking of the whole company. Their persons were first robbed and partially stripped as they descended from the door; they were then made to lie down with their mouths on the ground—and their trunks were rifled. One lady (the present prima donna of the opera in Mexico) lost $6000 in doubloons and jewels, at this very spot—notwithstanding a guard had been promised by the authorities, *and paid for*. The instances, however, were innumerable and *unpardonable*, while regiments of cavalry dozed within a quarter of a mile, in a city almost under Martial Law.

While I resided in the Capital, during Santa Anna's vigorous administration, he had some 65 or 70 *garrotted*. Two or three every week. This for a time struck terror to the band; but I learn that lately they have again taken to the road with renewed vigor.

dense forest spread out on every side its sea of foliage. The road was as smooth as a bowling-green, and we swung along over the levels, up hill and down, until we passed the PUENTE DE TESMELUCA, over a stream dashing from a mountain ravine like a shower of silver from among the verdure. After again ascending another mountain, and following its descent on the other side, we reached the village of RIO FRIO, a collection of the miserable huts of coal-burners, and the nest and nursery of as fierce a brood of robbers as haunt the forests. In proof of this, and, moreover, that the Cross, in this land, is no "*sign of redemption*," the sacred emblem was again spread out on every side, as yesterday in the Barranca Secca, marking the grave of some murdered traveller. We were once more in the fields of romance and robbery; yet, well guarded to-day by a vigilant troop, and in good spirits at the near termination of our trials, we again launched forth for our final ride. Leaving this narrow and desolate ravine among the hills, the road once more ascends by a series of short windings through the pine woods, among which the wind whistled cold and shrill as over our winter plains; and, thus gradually scaling the last mountain on our route, while the increased guard scoured the recesses of the forest, we reached the lofty summit in about an hour, and rolled for some distance along a level table land, catching glimpses, occasionally, of a distant horizon to the west, apparently as illimitable as the sea. The edge of the mountain was soon turned, and as the coach dipped forward on the descent of the western slope, a sudden clearing in the forest disclosed the magnificent VALLEY OF MEXICO.

The sight of land to the sea-worn sailor—the sight of home to the wanderer, who has not beheld for years the scene of his boyhood—are not hailed with more thrilling delight than was the exclamation from one of our passengers as he announced this prospect.

I am really afraid to describe this valley to you, as I dislike to deal in hyperboles. I have seen the Simplon—the Spleugen—the view from Rhigi—the "wide and winding Rhine"—and the prospect from Vesuvius over the lovely bay of Naples, its indolent waves sleeping in the warm sunshine on their purple bed—but none of these scenes compare with the Valley of Mexico. They want some one of the elements of grandeur, all of which are gathered here. Although the highest triumphs of human genius and art may disappoint you, *Nature never does*. The conceptions of Him who laid the foundations of the mountains, and poured the waters of the seas from his open palm, can never be reached by the fancies of men. And if, after all the exaggerated descriptions of St. Peter's and the Pyramids, we feel sick with disappointment when we stand before them, it is never so with the sublime creations of the Almighty.

You would, therefore, no doubt, most readily spare my attempting to give by the pen a description of what even the more graphic pencil has ever failed faithfully to convey. But I feel in some measure bound to make for you a *catalogue* of this valley's features, though I am confident I must fail to describe or paint them.

Conceive yourself placed on a mountain nearly two thousand feet above the valley, and nine thousand above the level of the sea. A sky above you of the most perfect azure, without a cloud, and an atmosphere so transparently pure, that the remotest objects at the distance of many leagues are as distinctly visible as if at hand. The gigantic scale of everything first strikes you—you seem to be looking down upon *a world.* No other mountain and valley view has such an assemblage of features, because nowhere else are the mountains at the same time so high, the valley so wide, or filled with such variety of land and water. The plain beneath is exceedingly level, and for two hundred miles around it extends a barrier of stupendous mountains, most of which have been active volcanos, and are now covered, some with snow, and some with forests. It is laced with large bodies of water looking more like seas than lakes—it is dotted with innumerable villages, and estates and plantations; eminences rise from it which, elsewhere, would be called mountains, yet there, at your feet, they seem but ant-hills on the plain; and now, letting your eye follow the rise of the mountains to the west, (near fifty miles distant,) you look over the immediate summits that wall the valley, to another and more distant range—and to range beyond range, with valleys between each, until the whole melts into a vapory distance, blue as the cloudless sky above you.

I could have gazed for hours at this little world while the sun and passing vapor chequered the fields, and sailing off again, left the whole one bright mass of verdure and water—bringing out clearly the domes of the village churches studding the plain or leaning against the first slopes of the mountains, with the huge lakes looming larger in the rarified atmosphere. Yet one thing was wanting. Over the immense expanse there seemed scarce an evidence of life. There were no figures in the picture. It lay torpid in the sunlight, like some deserted region where Nature was again beginning to assert her empire—vast, solitary and melancholy. There were no sails—no steamers on the lakes, no smoke over the villages, no people at labor in the fields, no horsemen, coaches, or travellers but ourselves. The silence was almost supernatural; one expects to hear the echo of the national strife that filled these plains with discord, yet lingering among the hills. It was a picture of "still life" inanimate in every feature, save where, on the distant mountain sides, the fire of some poor coal-burner, mingled its blue wreath with the bluer sky, or the tinkle of the bell of a solitary muleteer was heard from among the dark and solemn pines.

What a theatre for the great drama that has been performed within the limits of this valley! When CORTEZ first stood upon these mountains, and looked down on the lovely scene, peaceful then and rich under the cultivation of its Indian children; the hills and plains covered with forests, and much of what is now dry land hidden by the extensive lake, in the midst of which rose the proud city of the Aztec kings filled with palaces and temples; in site, another Venice on its inland sea; in art, the

Indian Attica—when he beheld, I say, this tranquil scene at his feet, what must have been the avarice and the relentlessness of an unknightly heart that urged him onward to the destruction and enslavement of a civilized and unoffending people, whose only crime was, the possession of a country rich enough to be plundered to minister to the luxury of a bigoted race beyond the sea!

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Our descent commenced from the eminence where we had halted awhile to survey the valley. Our coachman was an honest Yankee, fearless as the wild horses he drove, and they scoured along under his lash as if we had the level roads of New England beneath us. But, alas! we had not. I question whether there are any such roads elsewhere—in the world—nor can you conceive them, because your experience among the wilds of the Aroostook or the marshes of the Mississippi, can furnish no *symptoms* of such highways. They were gullies, washed into the mountain side by the rains; filled, here and there, with stones and branches; dammed up, to turn the water, by mounds a couple of feet high—and thus, gradually serpentining to the foot of the declivity. You may readily imagine that there was no such thing as *rolling* down with our rapid motion over such a ravine. We literally *jumped* from dam to dam, and rock to rock, and in many places where the steep is certainly at an angle of 45°, I must confess that I quailed at the impending danger while the horses bounded along as fiercely as if they bore Mazeppa. But the driver knew what he was about, and in an hour drew up at the Venta de Cordova, where, when I alighted, I found myself deaf and giddy from the heat, dust, and irregular motion. In a few moments, however, the blood poured from my head and I was relieved, though I felt ill and uncomfortable the rest of the day. Two of the other passengers suffered in the same manner.*

The succeeding distance of about thirty miles lies along the level, and skirts a detached range of volcanic hills between the lakes of Tezcoco and Chalco, the same which I described, some time ago, as rising like ant-heaps from the plain. We passed the village of Ayotla, and through a number of collections of mud-walled huts and desolate hovels, buried up among palm-trees and fields of barley and maguey, (resembling the streets of ruined tombs near Rome;) but nowhere did I see any evidence of neat or careful cultivation, or of comfort and thriftiness. In this the valley of Mexico is, markedly, different from that of Puebla. Misery and neglect reigned absolute. Squalid Indians in rags exhibiting almost entirely their dirty bodies, thronged the road; miserable devils coming

* Almost all travellers suffer from giddiness and flow of blood to the head on their arrival on the Valley of Mexico. This arises from the great rarefaction of the atmosphere, 7600 feet above the level of the sea.

from market; children, half-starved and naked, and women, whose wiry and uncombed hair gave them the mien of porcupines.

At length, as we gained the top of a little eminence our driver pointed out the "City of Mexico:"—a long line of turrets, and domes, and spires, lying in the lap of beautiful meadows, and screened, partially, by intervening trees, planted along the numerous avenues leading to the Capital. About two leagues from the city we came to the ancient border of the lake of Tezcoco, now a marshy flat from which the waters have receded. Here we mounted the Calzada, or causeway, raised about six feet above the surrounding waters.

This road is not one of the ancient avenues by which the city was approached, across the lake, during the reign of the Indians, but was constructed at great expense by the old Spanish Government. Although the land to the north of it is covered with *saline* particles that are perfectly visible as you ride along, yet the southern flats, being watered by the fresher stream from Chalco which flows through several apertures of the dike, are in no manner discolored. The northern marsh was covered with myriads of ducks, and looked as if it had been literally *peppered* with wild fowl. These birds are murdered in immense quantities with a sort of infernal machine, formed by the union of a great number of gun-barrels, and they furnish the chief food of the poor of Mexico.

Thus, about four o'clock, we passed this unprepossessing approach to the Capital, driving by the body of a man who had just been murdered, lying on the road side, with the blood flowing from his recent wound. Hundreds passed, but no one noticed him. At the gates we were detained only a moment for examination, and we entered the city by the Puerta de San Lazaro. A saint who suffered from impure blood, and presides over sores, may well be the patron of that portal and portion of the suburbs through which we jolted over disjoined pavements, while the water lay green and putrid in the stagnant gutter, festering in the middle of close streets, swarmed with ragged thousands. As I looked at them from our window, they seemed more like a population of witches, freshly dismounted from their broomsticks, than anything else to which, in fancy, I can readily compare them.

But the journey ended as we drove to the hotel Vergara, where a dirty court-yard, filled with sheep, chickens, horses, bath-houses, and a blacksmith's shop, received our jaded crew. I found that a kind friend had already prepared rooms for me, where, after a bath and dinner, I was made as comfortable as possible, by the attentions of a hospitable landlady.

LETTER VIII.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

You left me retiring to rest at my hotel in Mexico, and soundly did I repose after my last fatiguing ride from the mountains and over the plain to the city. I was roused, however, betimes by the clang of the church bells for early mass. This sound I had not heard since my visit to Italy many years ago, and it brought back to me many pleasant memories, as I lay half awake and half dreaming, during the early hours. When I arose other recollections of Italy were excited. The windows, descending to the ground, of the brick-paved room, thrown open, let in an air worthy of Naples the beautiful! It was the middle of November, but there was a May-mildness in the atmosphere. The sky was of that deep ultra-marine blue peculiar to elevated regions. As I ranged my eye down the street from my balcony, the town was alive with a teeming population; the windows of the houses stood open; fair women strolled homeward from mass; old monks shuffled along in their cowled robes; the butcher urged along his ass with its peripatetic stall hung around with various meats; freshly-leaved flowers and trees stood in the court-yards, of which I caught glimpses through the opened portals; and in the balconies lounged the early risers, enjoying a cigar after their cup of chocolate. It was a lively and beautiful scene, worthy of the pencil of that master painter of cities—*Cannaletti*, who would have delighted in the remarkable transparency and purity of the atmosphere through which the distant hills, some twenty miles off, seemed but a barrier at the end of the street!

The plan of the city of Mexico is precisely that of a checquer-board with a greater number of squares. Straight streets cross each other at right-angles and at regular intervals. The houses are painted with gay colors—light blue, fawn, and green, interspersed with a pure white, that remains long unstained in the dry atmosphere.

The view of all these from the elevated tower of the cathedral, (to which I soon repaired after my arrival in the capital,) presents a mass of domes, steeples, and flat-roofed dwellings, frequently covered, like hanging gardens, with flowers and foliage. Beyond the gates, (which you would scarcely think bounded a population of 200,000,) the vast plain stretches out on every side to the mountains, traversed in some places by

long lines of aqueducts sweeping to the city from the hills, and in others, studded with lakes, cultivation, and beautiful groves, until the distant view is closed by the volcanoes, whose snows rest against the blue sky, uncovered, at this season, by a single cloud.

Below is the great square or Plaza; a large paved area, fronted on the north, by the Cathedral; on the east, by the National Palace, (the residence of the President;) to the south of which, again, are the museum, and a stone edifice recently built in tasteful style, for a market. The corner-stone* of this was laid after I arrived in Mexico, and before I left, the building was nearly completed. Until that time the fruits, flowers, vegetables, and most of the necessaries of the table, had been sold on that spot, in shambles and booths built of *bamboos and reeds, sheltered from the rain and sun by thatched roofs!*

In the southwestern corner of the square is the Parian, an unsightly building (erected, I believe, since the revolution,) which greatly mars the effect of the Plaza. It is a useful establishment, however, as it affords a large revenue to the municipality, and is the great bazaar where every article requisite for the dress of Mexicans, male or female, may be purchased at reasonable prices. On the pavement which runs round it, sit numbers of coachmen whose stand is in the neighborhood, and crowds of women with ready-made shoes. Not the least curious, however, among the multitude, with which this side-walk is generally thronged, are about a dozen "*evangelistas*," or "letter-writers," whose post is always on the curb-stones of the eastern front of the Parian. A huge jug of ink is placed beside them; a board rests across their knees; a pile of different colored paper (most of which is either cut, *valentine fashion*, or flourished over and adorned with pen-and-ink ornaments,) is placed on it, and, on a stool before them, sits some disconsolate looking damsel or heart-broken

*A medal was struck in commemoration of this event, the legend on which I give for the sake of those who are curious in inscriptions of "modern" latin. The medal is perfectly plain, and of silver.

lover, pouring out a passion which the scribe puts into becoming phraseology. It is an important trade; and more money is earned in Mexico by this proxy-making love, than perhaps anywhere else. You can have a "*declaration*" for one *rial;* a *scolding letter* for a *medio;* and an *upbraiding epistle*, full of daggers, jealousy, love, and tenderness, (leaving the unfortunate recipient in a very distracted state of mind,) done upon azure paper be-sprinkled with hearts and doves, for the ridiculous price of *twenty-five cents!*

West of the Parian, and all around the southern and western sides of the Plaza, or those portions of it which are not directly occupied by the Cathedral and National Palace, run the arched PORTALES, similar to the arcades of Bologna. These are filled with gay shops, peddlers, caffès, old clothes, toys, flower-venders, sweetmeats, bookstalls, cutlers, curiosity-hunters, antiquities, (veritable and doubtful,) and the usual crowd of loungers and quidnuncs. Here the last revolution, or the probability of a new one, is in continual discussion, by knots of idlers. Above stairs, in some of the dwellings, are gambling-houses, as formerly in the Palais Royal, with which the scene here presented does not, of course, vie in taste or splendor.

Opposite to the southern end of the Parian is the *Casa Municipal*, or town-hall, in the lower story of which is the Lonja, (the Exchange of the merchants of Mexico,) a noble room, filled with all the gazettes of the Republic, of Europe, and the United States, and adjoined by an apartment in which readers may occasionally amuse themselves with a game of billiards.

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Descending from the tower of the Cathedral, let us enter the doors of the sacred edifice.

Its floor is of loose disjointed boards, filled with dirt and filth—the covering of the many dead who lie mouldering beneath. But with this, all meanness ends; and whether we contemplate the dimensions of the edifice, or the millions that have been spent upon its decoration, the mind is lost in wonder. It is impossible for me to describe the whole of this building to you—a book would not suffice for the immense and minute detail with which its walls and altars are embellished.

In order to afford you some idea of the wealth of the church, generally—and passing over plate glass and crystal, silver frames, lamps, carving and gilding enough to make an ordinary metropolitan church blaze with splendor—I will only mention one object in the body of the building: the altar and its accessories.

The Cathedral occupies a space of 500 feet by 420 front. The main altar is not erected against the wall, but near the centre of the edifice, beneath the dome. From this, extending around the choir probably two

hundred feet, there is a rail between four and five feet high, and of proportionable thickness, composed of *gold*, *silver*, and a small alloy of *brass*. This is surmounted with silver statues for candles. In front of the altar is the choir, itself a church, built of dark woods of the rarest antique carving. The altar (placed upon a marble platform, elevating it from the floor of the building, and covered with gold and silver ornaments, candlesticks and crosses,) is of wrought and polished silver; and the whole is surmounted by a small temple, in which rests the figure of the Virgin of Remedios, who enjoys the exclusive right *to three petticoats; one embroidered with pearls, another with emeralds, and a third with diamonds, the value of which, I am credibly informed, is not less than three millions of dollars!* This, you will recollect, is only *one part of one church in Mexico*, and that one said not to be the richest!

Around this splendid mine of wealth are half-naked Indians, gaping with surprise, or kneeling to the figure of some favorite saint—the misery of the man a painful contrast with the splendor of the shrine!

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Passing from the Cathedral door to the south-eastern portion of the city, you reach the outskirts, crossing, in your way, the canals from the lake. I have rarely seen such miserable suburbs; they are filled with hovels built of sun-dried bricks, often worn with the weather to the shape of holes in the mud, while on their earthen floors crawl, cook, live and multiply, the wretched-looking population of *léperos*.

This word, I believe, is not pure Spanish, but is derived originally, it is said, from the Castilian *lepra*, or leper; and although they do not suffer from that loathsome malady, they are quite as disgusting.

Blacken a man in the sun; let his hair grow long and tangled, or become filled with vermin; let him plod about the streets in all kinds of dirt for years, and never know the use of brush, or towel, or water even, except in storms; let him put on a pair of leather breeches at twenty, and wear them until forty, without change or ablution; and, over all, place a torn and blackened hat, and a tattered blanket begrimed with abominations; let him have wild eyes, and shining teeth, and features pinched by famine into sharpness; breasts bared and browned, and (if females) with two or three miniatures of the same species trotting after her, and another certainly strapped to her back: combine all these in your imagination, and you have a recipé for a Mexican lépero.

There, on the canals, around the markets and *pulque* shops, the Indians and these miserable outcasts hang all day long; feeding on fragments, quarrelling, drinking, stealing and lying drunk about the pavements, with their children crying with hunger around them. At night they slink off to these suburbs and coil themselves up on the damp floors of their lairs, to sleep off the effects of liquor, and to awake to another day of misery

and crime. Is it wonderful, in a city with an immense proportion of its inhabitants of such a class, (hopeless in the present and the future,) that there are murderers and robbers?

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In the Indian population which pours into the Capital from the lakes, I must say that there is apparently more worth and character. You see them lolling about in their boats on the canals, and passing and repassing in their canoes, plying between the city and Chalco and Tezcoco. It is a beautiful sight to behold these tiny vessels skim like floating gardens to the quays in the morning, laden to the water's edge with the fruits, flowers and vegetables, that hide the skiff that bears them.

The old houses in this neighborhood, rising out of the canals, the sluggish waters, and the dark multitude of the better classes in fanciful dresses, remind one strongly of Venice.

Skirting the canal, and leading to the plain which adjoins the *Chenampas*, or former floating gardens, is the *Paseo de la Viga*, a public drive frequented by the *beau monde*, both in coach and on horseback, during the season of Lent. Scarcely an afternoon passes, at that period of the year, that the observer will not find the canal covered with gay boat-loads of Indians, passing homeward from market, dancing, singing, laughing, strumming the guitar, and crowned with wreaths of *poppies*. I do not know the origin of the custom of wearing this forgetful flower; but it is both a healthier and more poetic oblivion than that resorted to by many folks in other lands, after a day of toil.

Turning once more westward, we again reach the great square.

As we pass the front of the National Palace, from out of its main portal dash fifty gayly-caparisoned huzzars, followed by a coach richly decked with crimson velvet and gold, drawn by four white horses and driven by a Yankee coachman. Behind this dash fifty more huzzars, while at the side of the coach, six aid-de-camps rein in their mettlesome chargers. There is but one person in the vehicle. His dress is that of a General of division, with red facings and gold embroideries. He wears a number of decorations around his neck, while a medal blazing with diamonds, voted to him by the nation, rests on his bosom. His sword-handle is studded with diamonds, and his hand rests on a diamond-headed cane. He is uncovered, and, as he passes and bows gracefully to your salutation, you recognize THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC!

The departure of the President from the Palace has attracted a crowd. The adjoining market, ever filled with people, pours forth its multitudes into the square.

First, there is the Aguador or water-carrier, with his two earthen jars—one suspended by a leathern belt thrown around his forehead and

THE AGUADOR.

resting on his back, and the other suspended from the back of his head in front of him, preserving the equilibrium.*

Next, there is the Indian with a huge coop of chickens and turkies or a crate of earthenware, or a pannier of oranges, borne on his back, like the aquador's jar. Then a woman, with peas, or ducks, or fish from the lake; another with potatoes; another drives along a poor stunted ass, laden with radishes and onions; and all the members of this motley crowd, are crying their wares and merchandise at the top of their voices. It is a Babel!

Amid the throng treads onward, with step majestic, the queenly Spanish woman; by her side is a friar, and hard by a couple of priests in their graceful black cloaks and shovel hats.

* An Englishman passing an *aguador* in the street, struck the jar on the fellow's back with his cane. It broke—and the weight of the other jar immediately brought the poor carrier on his nose. He arose in a rage. The offender, however, immediately calmed him with a couple of dollars. "I only wanted to see whether you was *exactly balanced*, my dear fellow, and *the experiment is worth the money!*"

FRIAR AND PRIESTS.

In the shadow of a pillar of the Portales sneaks a miserable looking wretch, wrapped in his tattered blanket—a lépero, porter, beggar, thief, as the occasion offers; and he takes the advantage of the latter employment in this moment of excitement, to ease an unsuspicious stranger of his handkerchief!

A tinkle of a bell at the door of the Cathedral sacristy, and a roll of drums calling out the guard of honor at the palace gate, give warning of a change of scene.

Slowly issues a gayly-painted coach with glass windows on all sides, drawn by spotted mules; a priest in his vestments sits within; a band of boys walk on each side, chanting a hymn; and in a moment, a deathlike stillness pervades the whole square. From the tradesman, selling his tapes under the Portales, to the thief, who has barely time to conceal the handkerchief in his dirty blanket, the whole crowd is uncovered and kneeling: the Host is passing to the house of some dying Catholic!

The carriage turns a corner, and the square is alive again; the tradesman to sell, the lépero to steal, and the lesson of death is forgotten for ever!

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Turning westward from the square we reach the ALAMEDA, by a very short walk through the *Calle Plateros*, a street filled with the shops of goldsmiths, watchmakers, French hairdressers, French cooks, French milliners, French carvers and gilders, and French print-sellers; and we pass on our way the rich Convent of the Professa or ex-Jesuits—and the more splendid one of the blue-robed Monks of St. Francis. The Alameda is a beautiful grove of forest-trees, planted on about ten acres of moist and luxuriant soil. The wood, which is walled and protected by gates closed every evening as the bells toll for *Oracion*, is intersected with walks and surrounded by a carriage road. Fountains fling up their waters where the paths cross each other, and the ground beneath the full-grown trees is filled with flowers and shrubbery. The great centre fountain is surmounted by a gilded figure of Liberty, and gilded lions spout forth the water at its feet. This, and the other smaller jets, in pleasanter and more secluded nooks, are circled with stone seats. It is the fashion to come here in carriages and on horseback every evening, (except during Lent,) and to drive round and round the inclosure, on the soft roads in the dense shade, until the vesper bell—or, to draw up in line on the side of one of the highways, while the cavaliers pass up and down in review, or prattle away half an hour at the coach-window of some renowned belle.

But there can be nothing more delightful than a walk here during the early morning. There is a freshness then in the air, a quiet and peacefulness, that are found at no other time of the day. The student comes with his book; the priest, from his early mass; the nurse, with her baby; the sentimental miss, to sigh for her lover, (and perhaps to see him;) the dyspeptic, to earn an appetite for his breakfast; the monk, the lounger, and even the laborer, stop for a moment beneath the refreshing shades, to take breath for the coming day. It is almost druidical in the solemn stillness of its groves, placed in the midst of a population of two hundred thousand. Even the birds seem to have been made sacred; scared from the plains, they are here in sanctuary, and no profane hand dares touch them. They have consequently planted, as if by consent of each other, distinct colonies in different parts of the wood; the owl, sitting on her branch, in one place; the doves, making love the business of their lives in another; the mocking-birds, making a third spot a perfect choir; and innumerable sparrows and wrens, like so many Paul Prys, chattering and pottering about with an intrusive pertness through the dominions of all the rest.

Directly west of the Alameda, and on the same street, is the *Passeo Nuevo*, another delightful drive of a mile in length, bordered with paths and trees, and divided by fountains adorned with statuary and sculpture.

Passing out of the western gate of the Alameda, the fashionables every evening take a turn or two along this drive. On festivals it is crowded. All the equipages of the city *must be there*, and it is the mode for every person of consideration, or who desires consideration, to

possess an equipage. It is not thought "*exactly proper*" for a lady ever to walk, except to mass—or, sometimes, when she goes shopping. The coach, therefore, on all gala days, is sure to appear on the Passeo with its fair burden, dressed in the French style, as for a dinner party or a ball. When I first arrived in Mexico, it was rare to see a bonnet on such occasions; but that awkward appendage of fashionable costume was becoming gradually in vogue before I left.

For an hour, or more, it is the custom to pass up and down the sides of the Passeo, nodding and smiling at the cavaliers, who show off their horsemanship along the centre of the road. Here the utmost luxury and style are exhibited in the equipment of carriage and animals. Gold embroidery, silver plating, and every ornament that can add splendor to harness and livery are brought forth. To such an extent is the taste for these exhibitions carried, that one of the millionaires of Mexico appears occasionally at the Paseo, on a saddle which (without counting the value of the rest of his caparison,) cost the sum of five thousand dollars. It was the *chef d'œuvre* of an honest German saddler, who made it, and—*retired* from trade to his beloved "father land."

On approaching this charming drive, the whole plain of the Valley of Mexico is at once revealed to you, without passing a dirty suburb. On your right, is the cypress-covered and castle-crowned hill of Chapultepec, formerly the site, it is alleged, of one of Montezuma's palaces; before you and behind, stretch two immense aqueducts—the one coming from the hills, the other from a greater distance, near Tacubaya, and screening that village as it leans against the first slopes of the western mountains. On your left tower the volcanoes, on whose summits the last rosy rays of sunset are resting.

The gay throng disperses, as the moon rises from behind the mountains, pouring a flood of clear light, bright as the day in other lands, over the tranquil landscape.

The moonlight of Mexico is marvellously beautiful. That city, you remember, is 7,500 feet above the level of the sea, and nearly that number of feet closer to the stars than we are; the atmosphere, consequently, is more rarefied, and the light comes, as it were, pure, and pellucid from heaven: you seem able to touch the stars, so brilliantly near do they stand out relieved against the back-ground of an intensely blue sky. Strolling on such nights in Mexico, when I saw the sharp lines of tower and temple come boldly out with shape and even color, almost as bright, yet softer than at noon-day, I have often been tempted to say that the moonlight you get at home (much as it is the theme of poets and lovers,) is but second-hand stuff, compared with that of Mexico.

And so with the climates. Between the sea-shore at Vera Cruz and the volcanoes, whose eternal snows hang over Mexico, you have every climate of the world.

In the Valley there is a perpetual spring. For six months in the year (the winter months, as they are called,) rain never falls; during

the other six months showers occur almost daily. It is never hot—never very cool, and you may wear your cloak or your summer dress the whole year according to the temper of your nervous system. One side of the street is always *too* warm at noon. Cold and sleeting as it is here in January, the roses are already blooming freshly in the gardens of Mexico. Nor is there perceptible change of foliage on the forest trees; the new leaves push off the old ones with a "gentle force," and the regeneration of the seasons is effected without the process of fading, wilting, withering and dying, which makes with us the melancholy days of autumn "the saddest of the year."

To look at the external world, you would say there was no such thing as death in Mexico. The rose and the leaf you admire to-day, are replaced to-morrow, by fresh buds and renewed verdure.

LETTER IX.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

When a traveller arrives in an European city, nothing is easier than to find at once every species of accommodation for his comfort. Indeed, it is not necessary to seek them. He can scarcely walk a square in any of the capitals without being attracted by inviting labels, which promise splendid apartments and every luxury requisite in this age of elegance and ease.

Not so in Mexico. The Hotel Vergara, at which I first descended, though kept by a most courteous lady, who does all in her power to render her guests comfortable, is but a miserable establishment compared even with our most ordinary inns. It is but a small remove from the Fondas and Mesones of the olden time in Mexico. This arises from the fact that *travelling* is only of a recent date; a new invention as it were, in Mexico. In former times, articles of merchandise were sent under the care of Arrieros, who were satisfied with the accommodation of the ordinary tavern, to wit: four walls, covered with a roof, in which they might stretch their mats, pile their saddles, and sleep—living, the while, on tortillias, onions, pulque and jerked meats. Whenever the better classes found it needful to visit the Capital, the house of some friend was open to them, and thus, hospitality prevented the creation of an honest race of Bonifaces to welcome the weary wayfarer.

I soon became tired of my comfortless apartment, for which an extravagant price was charged, and betook myself to furnished rooms in a French Hotel, called the "Gran Sociedad," where, for about seventy dollars a month, I got a flea-haunted bed—space enough for my books and papers—a broad balcony shielded from the sun by a fanciful curtain—and two Frenchified meals per day, from a restaurateur kept in the same building.

Here I tarried six months, until, tired in turn of the discomforts and expense, I went to housekeeping in a set of apartments with the American Consul. We took a portion of the first floor of a dwelling in the *Calle Vergara*, belonging to an ex-Marquesa, to whom, and to her worthy son, I must bear the testimony of a grateful heart for unwearied kindness in sickness and in health. The residence was one of the pleasantest, for its size, I know in Mexico. The entrance is into a paved yard, around which the house is built, with its apartments looking into the court from

INTERIOR OF A MEXICAN HOUSE.

all sides, perfectly screened from the street and sun. On the second floor, (on which we lodged,) a corridor runs round the walls, covered with a roof to protect it from the weather, and filled with orange and lemon trees, and a variety of flowering shrubs, planted in vases of rare old India china, that would delight the heart of a London fancier.

Here my days were passed in the fulfillment of my official duties, and my evenings, when not at the theatre, (which I found a great aid in acquiring the language,) in the midst of this pleasant family. The excellent lady at the head of it had once belonged to one of the wealthiest establishments in the Republic. The revolutions, and a series of mishaps, had broken her fortunes; yet they could not deprive her of her talents, her accomplishments, her vivacity, or the kindness of her heart and temper. Qualities like these were sure to endear the friends of her better days, and, in truth, they had not deserted her. It was thus, that in her apartments, over a quiet game of *monte*, where a thousand *nuts* were the highest stake; I made many of my pleasantest acquaintances, both male and female, in Mexico. Here too I saw the better phases of Mexican character, in private life. The respect for age—the sincerity of friendship—the results of reading and education—and the honest, unpretending *naturalness* of character for which, over all other people I have ever met with, I think the best of them are remarkable.

It has been taxed upon people who live in fine climates—where the warm sun and the teeming fields woo constantly to the open air—that they want the social virtues. They possess no fireside—that focus into which the family affections are gathered and cherished. I will not pretend that the Mexicans are a *home people*, like the Germans, the English, and, perhaps, ourselves; but it is equally certain, that they are not without those social tastes and reunions, which make their dwellings a favorite resort. It is true, that much time is devoted by fashionable society to the morning mass, the evening drive, and to the theatre; but, in a population of 200,000, these should not be regarded as the characteristics of the whole people. It is this partial examination of a class, and an identification of its peculiarities, habits or tastes, with those of the whole nation, that is the error of English tourists in their descriptions of our own country. It is neither by the most fashionable society—which is always the most corrupt, deceitful and unsubstantial; nor by the very lowest class, which is always the most vicious—that we are to characterize nations. In the sober, patient, patriotic, toilsome, well taught, frugal, middle ranks of life—the true virtues, and noblest features of a people are most evident; and, although these characteristics may be found both among the very highest and the very lowest, yet it is alone in this class that they may be sought with certainty.

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The houses of the Mexicans are usually built of the strongest materials, either brick or stone, and without much architectural pretension. They are erected around *patios*, or court-yards, and are from 30 to 40 feet front

on the street—the grand saloon being generally the length of the whole house. On the ground-floor are the porter's lodge, offices and carriage-house. From this, a flight of steps leads to an *entresol*, devoted to the domestics, while the upper story is universally the fashionable and best one. Here the family dwells in perfect seclusion from the street and neighbors, and the arcade which fronts their doors is filled with the choicest fruit and flower-trees in constant bloom. Above all this is the *azotea*, or flat, paved roof, a delightful retreat on summer nights. The front windows of the houses are all guarded by balconies covered with gayly-colored awnings; and on days of festival, when filled with the gay throng of Mexican women, and hung with tapestry and velvet, they present a most brilliant appearance.

The carriage, and ever-harnessed mules, stand constantly in the court-yard below; and the postillion is ready to mount and sally forth at a moments' notice until after dark, when the large front gate is closed, locked and barred; and the house becomes as quiet and secure as a castle, with which no communication from without is permitted, until you tell your name, or signify to the porter the object of your visit. Until this ceremony has passed, no bolt is drawn in the wicket or latch raised to admit you; and the caution is extremely necessary, on account of the frequent robberies that have been committed by allowing unknown persons to enter after dark.

It has been said that "cleanliness is a virtue," and I think that politeness should be classed next to it. Cleanliness does not always proceed from the mere love of personal or domestic purity, but is often a mere evidence of respect for the opinion of the world. The same, perhaps, may be said of politeness. Be it what it may, however, it is one of the most agreeable sacrifices of social intercourse. The "old school" seems to have taken refuge among the Mexicans. They are formally, and I think, substantially, the politest people I have met with. Bowing and shaking hands are common all the world over, and in our country we do it stiffly, and often gruffly enough. Savages salute one another with a grunt, and the Chinese touch noses. But, in Mexico, there is something more than mere *nonchalant* nods of recognition and farewell. If you enter a Mexican's house, there is no rest among the inmates until you are made perfectly at ease, and your hat and cane taken from you. The lady does not sit on the sofa—nod when you come in as if it were painful to bend or rise—talk with you about the weather as if your rheumatisms made you a species of walking barometer—and then expect you to nod again, and take yourself off as a bore; but a frankness and a warmth are immediately thrown into the manner of the whole household as soon as you appear. No matter what they may be engaged in, or how much occupied; all is forgotten in a moment, and they are entirely at your service. Here, in the United States, I have paid fifteen or twenty visits on a morning with a fashionable lady. To do so in Mexico—a man would be set down as an oddity. A visit *is* a visit—it is intended to be something.

People feel that they can see, look at, and pass each other *in the street;* and they think a stare of five minutes from a chair, as meaningless as a stare on one's legs in the highway. In the saloon, they regard it proper to devote much time to the interchange of opinions sociably; and they look upon indifference or a *distrait* air, or what would elsewhere be called *fashionable ease,* as little better than rudeness.

Upon entering a room, after any unusual absence, if well known to all the members of a family, you go through the process of an embrace, and the health and occupations of every member of your family are minutely and affectionately inquired for. After a while, if there are girls in the house, a little music will be given, or their drawings, embroidery, or other pretty works displayed, as you are supposed to have an interest in such things. And if you are a particular favorite, the lady of the mansion, who indulges in a *cigarrito,* will take a delicate one from her golden *etui,* light it, touch it to her lips, and present it to you.

At parting, the ceremony is very formal. You bid good-bye with an embrace, or, if less acquainted, with a profound bow to each individual; you turn at the door of the saloon, and bow again; the master of the house accompanies you to the head of the stairs, where you shake hands and bow again; you look up from the landing of the first flight of stairs, and find him ready with another; and as you pass through the court-yard below, (if he like you, or you happen to be a person of consideration,) you find him gazing from among the flowers over the balustrade, and still gracefully nodding farewell! Before this *finale* it is not very safe to put on your hat.

LADY GOING TO MASS.

There are few things more beautiful than the salutation of a Mexican lady. Among themselves they never meet without embracing. But to men and strangers, on the street, they lift the right hand to near the lips, gently inclining the head toward it, and gracefully fluttering their fingers, send forth their recognition with an arch-beaming of the eye that is *almost* as bewitching as a kiss.

The universal conclusion of the day with a fashionable lady in Mexico, is the theatre. She begins with mass, to which she walks in the morning with her mantilla gracefully draped around her head, and falling in folds of splendid lace over her breast and shoulders. But the night must end in full dress at the opera or theatre. It is as regular and as much a matter of course as her meals.

It is then you may behold the Mexican woman in perfection. And yet, to confess the truth, I cannot say that they are beautiful according to our ideas of beauty in the United States.

You do not see those charming skins and rosy complexions, nor do you observe that variety of tint which springs from the mingling of many nations on our soil; but there is, nevertheless, something in Mexican women, be they fair or dark, that bewitches while you look at them: it is, perhaps, a universal expression of sweetness and confiding gentleness.

There is not much regularity of features; no "Attic foreheads and Phidian noses;" no "rose-bud lips whose kisses pout to leave their nest;" no majestic symmetry to compel admiration; but their large, magnificent eyes, where the very soul of tenderness seems to dwell, and their natural grace, conquer every one. Their gait is slow, stately, majestic.

The commonest woman of the middle ranks you encounter on the streets, with but a fanciful petticoat, and her shawl or *reboso*, struts a queen—her feet small almost to deformity. Her figure, though full to *embonpoint*, you never think too fat; her lively enthusiasm always seems tempered and delicately subdued by the softness of her eye, and you feel that her complexion, sallow or dark as it often is, is yet no more than

> "The embrowning of the fruit that tells
> How rich within the soul of sweetness dwells."

I give opposite, sketches of the costume of the lower class of females, as you see them constantly in the house and on the street, with and without the shawl, or *reboso*. *Without it* the dress is scarcely any dress at all: one garment—besides a petticoat—braced with a sash around the waist, while the hair falls in a long plait down the back. *With it*—their costume is made up. Flung gracefully over the left shoulder and passed across the mouth—you see nothing but the eyes, which are her greatest charm, and she never attempts to conceal them or neglect their power.

In speaking of the fine eyes, the beautiful feet, and the queenly tread of the Mexican ladies, and their costume, I should not forget to mention that an embroidered India crape shawl, blazing with all the colors of the

WITH AND WITHOUT THE REBOSO.

rainbow, and a *painted fan*, are indispensable portions of a complete dress. The *fan* is none of your new-fangled inventions of feather and finery, but the old-fashioned reed and paper instruments used by our grandmothers. The opening and shutting—the waving and folding of these is an especial language. They touch them to their lips—flirt them wide open—close them—let their bright eyes peep over the rim—display their jewelled hands and witching eyes, and, in fact, carry on a warfare of graceful coquetry from behind these pasteboard fortresses, that has forced, ere now, many a stout heart to cry for quarter!

LETTER X.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

SENTIMENTAL BUTCHER AND PROFESSIONAL BEGGARS.

It is the custom for most of the small dealers to hawk their wares about the streets, and indeed, you may thus be supplied with all the necessaries of life. The aguador brings you water. The butcher sends his ass with meat. The Indians bring butter, eggs, fruit, and vegetables; the boatmen, fresh fish from the lake; and cakes and sweetmeats are carried daily in trays to your door. There are, nevertheless, a market and stalls, or small shops in the streets. In a large and poor population like this the competition must necessarily be very great.

One of the butchers in the *Calle Tacuba* always amused me. His shop is about the size of a stall, the whole front being open to the street, with a fine game-cock, tied by the leg on the sill. Suspended from the ceiling, and but two or three feet from the doorway, hangs the entire carcass of a beef; at a short distance behind is the counter; and, in the rear of this again, is a row of kids and delicate morsels, festooned with gilt paper and yards of sausages, hung in the most tasteful lines and curves. In the centre of this carnal show rests an image of the "Holy Virgin of Guadalupe," under whose protection he thus places his larder and his "custom."

The most interesting figure, however, in the picture, is the butcher himself; a sentimental-looking fellow, with black eyes, curling locks, and altogether a most captivating personage, barring a sort of oily lustre that polishes his skin. I invariably find him lounging romantically over his saw and cleaver, strumming his guitar to half-a-dozen housemaids, who, doubtless, are attracted to his steaks by his amorous staves. It is rare to see such a mixture of meat and music. What would be said with us at home, to see the celebrated Jones or Smith, in the Fulton market, mounted on his block, with a blue ribbon about his neck, and a dozen damsels grouped around him, listening, with rapt air, to the pet *morceau* of the last opera! Yet the suggestion might be useful in these days, when invention is taxed to the utmost for new modes of attracting the people. In Mexico at any rate it is characteristic, and I have, therefore, noted it.

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HEAD OF BEGGAR.

Go where you will in this city, you are haunted by beggars. Beggary is a *profession;* but it is not carried to quite the extent that it is in some of the Italian States, and especially the Sicilian dominions.

The capital employed in this business is blindness, a sore leg, a decrepit father or mother, or a helpless child; in the latter case, a stout hearty boy usually straps the feeble one on his back, and runs after every passer beseeching succor. With such a stock in trade, and a good sunny corner, or wall of a church door, the petitioner is set up for life. Placed in so eligible a situation, their cry is incessant from morning to night: "Señores amigos, por el amor de dios;" "for the love of the blessed Virgin!" "by the precious blood of Christ!" "by the holy mystery of the Trinity!" repeated with many variations between their eternal scratchings, winking of lids over sightless balls, and the display of maimed limbs and every species of personal deformity. There is no "poor-house" in Mexico, to which such vagrant wretches are forced to go.

One blind beggar, remarkably well dressed, and a person who has evidently enjoyed better fortunes, takes up his place on the seat around the chief fountain of the Alameda, every day at noon, and is attended *by a couple of servants;* his respectful demeanor is, doubtless, a *valuable capital.*

Another beggar has a *burly porter* to carry him seated in a chair on his back.

Then there are silent beggars—"*poveri vergognosi*,"—as you see in Italy; men who make no oral demand for charity, but crook their bodies, and bow their concealed faces, in such a shape of interrogative supplication, that the heart must be hard that could resist them. One of this species particularly arrested my notice. I never met him by daylight, and he may not have been what he appeared to be; but often at midnight, when returning from the theatre, I have encountered him, cold and shivering under the portales. He seemed to be at least 80 years of age; was bent almost double, had a shocking bad cough, and squeaked out in the most piping treble you ever heard, that "*he was just waiting for some one to take him home.*" He had been waiting thus for many a year!

They all have different voices according to the length of time they have been employed. There are your old sturdy beggars who bellow out their ritual; then the modest novice; then an old fellow who never utters a distinct word, but *rolls on the ground and howls*, as if with pain; the while his eyes glance from right to left to see *how it operates!* Near my dwelling, at a church door, always sat a gray-headed blind man, who was as much a fixture as one of the pillars of the edifice. The oldest neighbors could not remember when he first came there. He usually arrived about noon, as soon as the shadow of the church fell over his wonted seat and afforded shade. He begged stoutly for an hour or so, when a daughter brought him an excellent warm dinner. This dispatched, he went to work again with the "por el amor de dios," until he literally sang himself into a *siesta*. Yet the ruling passion never deserted him even in sleep. His

head nodded, but his open and outstretched palm rested on his knee—a permanent money-box!

Although exhibitions like this are enough to shut the heart in a country where the earth yields almost for the asking, yet there are cases of misery that do not appeal in vain.

A poor little beggar-boy attracted my attention by haunting the door of the Gran Sociedad. We noticed him first by seeing something coiled up in the corner of the portal, which looked like a dirty puppy dog, shivering with the cold. Slowly, however, at our approach, it unwound itself from the lair, and a poor little boy tottered toward us with the most wan and wretched look I ever beheld, and the most beautiful black eyes that ever appealed for charity. He was a personification of poor Oliver Twist—a perfect little atomy. We gave him a *real*, and he trotted off delighted; yet his feeble limbs, around which there was scarcely any clothing, refused to carry him twenty steps: he tottered and fell against the wall to which he clung for support. I went to him again: "Muero de los frios, señor,"—I am dying of the chills, said he, in his little piping voice, rendered almost inarticulate from pain, accompanied by that slow motion of the head from side to side indicative of suffering.

We put a small blanket over him, gave him shoes and food, and thus strengthened and warmed, he gradually reached home.

The next day he made his appearance again, without shoes, shirt, or blanket, and with no covering but his ragged trowsers of cotton, tied across his shoulder with a piece of twine, and an old handkerchief about his neck. It was decided that he was a professional beggar, and his pains were but capital acting.

I did not think so, however; and while others speedily rejected him, I determined to satisfy myself that a human being would voluntarily starve himself until the bones peered through his shrunken skin, before I would deny the sufferer the comfort of a daily morsel. Upon inquiry, I found that his story was true: that he was the only child of a bed-ridden mother, who, confined with rheumatism to a mat stretched on the earthen floor of a hovel in the suburb, had been unable to provide food for herself or her son for more than a month. Besides this, the urchin had sold the shoes and blanket we had given him to buy bread for his parent.

He was a regular pensioner afterward, and his mother recovered. The last time I saw him was in the Alameda, to which he had crawled, saying that the "sunshine felt so comfortable, and that in its broad walks he did not suffer so much from the '*frios*.'"

For a long period, after this, I missed the urchin, and knew not what had become of him; until one afternoon passing the wall of the convent of Santa Clara, I saw a man trotting along at the usual Indian gait, with a tray on his head which appeared to be covered with roses. Behind him was a ragged *lépera*, in tears, with her long black hair hanging over her shoulders. As the man passed me, I looked into the tray and found it contained a corpse. It was that of a child who had died of consump-

tion. The flesh, worn to the utmost emaciation, was stretched tightly over the prominent bones; his little hands were bound over his breast, with a single thread of gold, in the attitude of prayer; the body was sprinkled with faded artificials, and its mouth was perked up, and its lips parted, as if the sufferer had died with a wail of pain.

It was my little beggar-boy. The "*frios*" had been too much for him.

LETTER XI.

A BULL FIGHT.

I WAS told after my arrival in Mexico, that unless I remained some time I was likely to lose the three great "amusements" of Mexico, to wit: a Revolution—an Earthquake—and a Bull Fight. The two former I would gladly have dispensed with; and as to the latter, civilization had recently introduced the Opera, and the *cadenzas* of Italian vocalists had been substituted for the roars of the dying bull.

But I was to be gratified by the sight of at least one of these recreations.

A fight came off rather unexpectedly in the Plaza de Toros, an immense circus, erected when this sport was in its palmy days in Mexico.

It was Sunday, and the people were unoccupied. The idlers had a few spare *medios*, picked up by toil, beggary or pilfering, during the week, and, as to the rich, it was expected that of course they would be gratified by the sight of an exhibition from which they had been long debarred.

I have a great objection to all these brutal displays, but I hold it to be a man's duty to see a specimen of everything in the course of his life. In Europe I went to see dissections and the guillotine, and on that principle, in Mexico I went to a bull fight.

The expectations of the projectors of the day's sport were not disappointed. The two tiers of boxes and the circle below of this immense theatre, were filled to the very brim of the arena with not less than eight thousand men, *women* and children. The hour of opening was four o'clock—the day warm and cloudless—and the sun shone brightly over the motley assemblage in their gay and varied costumes. The sunny side of the edifice was devoted to the plebs—the other half to the patricians, or half-a-dollar payers, who thereby enjoyed the luxury of shade.

We arrived too late to see the entrance of the first bull—he was already in the arena, and the *picadors* were goading him with their long lances, while the six gayly-dressed, lithe and active *matadors* teased him with red cloaks, which they flirted within a few feet of his horns, and enabled them, as he sprung to gore the garment, to display their agility in avoiding the deadly blow of his horns.

After annoying him thus with cloaks and lances for about ten minutes, a trumpet was sounded; and immediately a dozen *banderillos*, or small lances, covered with gilt and flowered paper, were stuck in his neck, making him bound with rage at the assailant as he felt every new sting of the cruel weapons.

This done, the crowd circled around, and he stood in the midst, snorting, pawing the earth, veering his head from one portion of the ring to the other, beholding everywhere an armed foe pointing at him with a lance, and howling as if to dare them to attack. But he was effectually tamed.

Another blast from the trumpet, and two of the matadors approached stealthily from the rear, and plunged lances surrounded with fireworks, into the skin of his neck. Snorting, roaring, blazing, cracking, he bounded over the arena lashing himself with his tail, and dashing, without purpose, at everything.

At the third blast of the trumpet, the chief matador, who now made his first appearance, stepped forth, and proceeded to the judge's gallery for the sword, to dispatch the animal. By this time the fireworks had burned out, and the bull had been teased toward the southern barricade of the theatre. Panting with fatigue, rage and exhaustion, he stood at bay. The matador (an Andalusian, in pumps, silk stockings, and a tight-fitting purple dress, embroidered with bugles,) was a person of herculean frame, and his manly form, in the perfection of human beauty and strength, contrasted finely with the huge mass of bone and muscle in the beast.

He wound his red cloak around the short staff which he held in his left hand, and approached the bull, grasping in his right his well-poised sword. The bull, worried by the red cloak, bounded at him. As the animal stooped to gore, the matador leapt to the left with the bound of a deer, and receiving the beast with the whole shock of his weight and spring on the point of his weapon, passed it through his heart, and laid him dead without a struggle at his feet. The circus rang with applause at the successful stroke. Drawing out his blade, black with blood, the matador wiped it on the cloak, and bowing to the multitude, restored it to the judge.

The trumpet sounded again: a rope was noosed around the beast's horns, three gayly-caparisoned horses were led in, the carcass was hitched to them, and, at another blast of the trumpet they dragged the body, at full gallop, out of the circus. A shovel-full of fresh earth was thrown over the pool of blood; the trumpet was again sounded; the eastern barricade thrown open, and in bounded the second bull.

Almost blinded by his sudden plunge into daylight from the utter darkness of his den, and astounded by the shouts and jeers of the spectators, he rushed to the centre of the arena, and paused. His head wandered from side to side, as if seeking for something at which to tilt. He pawed the earth, lashed his back with his tail, and was evidently "game."

In a moment, the three picadors were at him with their long lances; and, in the next, two of them were rolling in the dust, and trampled by the savage beast. This brought *applause* from the multitude; and an honest Irishman near me shouted, at the top of his lungs, "*bravo*, bull!"

The matadors, however, were instantly at him with their red cloaks, and distracting his attention from the fallen picadors, gave them time to rise and mount—at least *one* of them, I should say, for the horse of the other had been gored in the stomach, and as he rose, his entrails trailed along the ground!

The usual routine was gone through with this bull as with the first; and at length the trumpet sounded for the chief matador to receive the sword.

But this was evidently not an animal to be trifled with; and the courageous Andalusian approached him warily. As he came up with the bull, the beast was near the edge of the barricade, and foaming with rage. His hair was yet blazing from the explosion of the crackers. The Andalusian flirted the red cloak in his eyes, and, turning as usual to the right to give the blow as the animal sprang, he lucklessly missed his aim, and was caught at a yard's distance between the palisade and the beast. A bound over the inclosure saved him, while the bull's horns were driven against the boards, with a force that made the theatre ring and the strong timbers quiver.

Directly, however, was the stout-hearted fighter again on the sands and taunting his foe. Another spring—another wave of the cloak in the beast's eyes—and his sword was plunged up to the hilt in his neck, the point penetrating the skin and hair and shining out on his other side, just above the right shoulder. Yet the wound was *not* fatal, and the beast bounded on madder than ever. A picador came at him, and was trampled in the dust. Another came on, and his horse, too, was tossed in the air; yet, preserving his balance, he alighted on his feet, and as his horse rose from his fall, he rose with him, seated on his saddle; at the same time, with admirable presence of mind, slinging his *lasso*, which caught on one horn but unfortunately slipped off. Unsuccessful as was this act, the self-command, the horsemanship, and the graceful skill of the picador, brought down a storm of applause.

Meantime, the Andalusian had recovered his wind, and was ready for another assault on his unconquered foe; but this time he made the attack *unarmed*. Mad as the animal was, and goaded by the lances sticking in his back, his skin scorched, and the weapon thrust through his body, yet the matador approached bravely; he threw his cloak once more on the beast's eyes, and, with a leap over his horns as he stooped, caught the handle of the sword and drew it out streaming with blood.

What with annoyance, and exhaustion from the loss of blood, the bull's strength was by this time well nigh spent. He made for the door in the barricade whence he had been admitted to the arena. He paused at the gate—the blood pouring from his wound. It was evident he was dying,

and all attacks were at once abandoned. He had fought so bravely that picadors, matadors, coleadors, and all the troop of the arena drew round him in a circle, as if to look on the death-struggle of a hero. All seemed struck with admiration! the léperos in the galleries, even, were hushed to profound silence.

The bull stood a moment as if uncertain what to do. I confess that the poor wretch seemed to me to possess intellect—an intellect, stung by the reproach of strength foiled by an inferior and despised foe.

He felt his limbs grow feebler. He attempted to run, but his legs refused to move. He lifted his feet convulsivly—waved his tail—opened his eyes as if alarmed by a sudden nervous fear, and fixed them with a fierce stare on the blood which was pouring in a stream before him. He tried to run; reeled twice, but recovered his balance. A matador then came again before him with his cloak and a short dagger, to put an end to the painful scene; but as he approached, the beast swayed himself forward with his lips drawn up, and the foam covering his teeth—drew himself up still and stiff as a statue, for a dying effort of power—then suddenly bending his head to the earth, sprang at the matador and fell dead—

"Foiled, breathless, bleeding, furious—to the last!"

* * * * * * * *

This was the best fight of the evening. Five more bulls were brought out, but nearly all proved craven. None, however, were killed by the matador at the first blow, which rather lowered the mob's opinion of his skill. Some of the animals were caught by the tail, which, twisted around the high pommel of the saddles of the coleadors, while their horses were brought to a sudden halt, threw the bulls on their sides. These, however, were the utter cowards. Others were caught with the *lasso* around the horns or heels, and I had thus the first opportunity of seeing the perfection obtained by most Mexican horsemen in the use of this useful instrument. One of the bulls bounded over the palisade, among the spectators, within a few feet of me; but he was so contemptible a beast, that he seemed more pleased to get rid of the crowd than the crowd was to get rid of him. He was of course sacrificed in some very ignoble manner.

As the evening sports ended, and even before sunset, the moon rose in her calm majesty, casting her mild light on the multitude in that bloody circus. The towers and dome of a church overlook the walls of the arena on the east, and the bells called the crowd from that scene of carnage on the Sabbath evening, to the adjacent retreat of peacefulness and religion! As I went home, I could not help asking myself, if I had spent those hours profitably? It is true that there are "sermons in stones, and good in everything;" and the contrast of life and death—the passage of a creature from robust and active health, and the full enjoyment of every physical power, to death and utter oblivion—was, it is equally true, a sermon and a lesson. But to how many? Was there a lépero there, who went away taught, thoughtful or moralizing?

I must confess, that I can regard these festivals but with a feeling of unqualified disgust, both at the scene itself, and at the gradual destruction of the finer sentiments which such exhibitions, frequently repeated before all classes, must inevitably produce.

When the Romans had exhausted the whole round of natural amusements, they invented those of the circus; and, not contented with the civilized butchery of the brute creation, in process of time they matched man against beast, and man against man. It was the extreme of refinement—the height of expensive luxury—the termination of that vicious circle of society, where civilization merges into barbarism. It was an omen of the speedy decline of that mighty empire.

The exhibition of the slaughter-house, as a sport, can tend alone to foster à brutal passion for blood. Death becomes familiarized as a plaything to the multitude. They make a clown of the grim monster. They put him as a joker on the arena for Sabbath sports; and the day that is assigned as a period of repose, thankfulness, love, and remembrance of the blessed God, is converted into a school-time of the worst passions that can afflict and excite the human heart.

It may be said, that this is not true of all classes. I grant it, and reply that although all classes visit the circus, yet the majority of the spectators is doubtless composed of the lowest ranks, requiring most moral instruction, and least addicted to reasoning. With such a population as that of the léperos of Mexico, (men scarcely a remove from the beasts whose slaughter they gloat on,) these scenes of murder, in which bulls, matadors and picadors, are often indiscriminately slain, can only serve to nourish the most wicked passions, and to nerve the ignorant and vile to deeds of most daring criminality.

It will be a matter of sincere congratulation for Mexican patriots, when this remnant of barbarism is abolished in their country, and the thousands which are annually expended in bull-fights throughout the Republic, are devoted to the education or rational amusement of the people.

LETTER XII.

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE AND HER FESTIVAL.

THE 12th of December is the Festival of the "VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE," (the Patron Saint of Mexico;) and as the history of this personage, and the ceremonies in her honor are rather singular; and the shrine where she is worshipped is one of the most magnificent in the Republic, I will give you some account of them.

The church lies about three miles from the city, at the foot of the Sierra that rises from the plain on the north. The great Collegiate edifice is built on the level ground; but the ancient, and I believe the original chapel, is on the top of an adjacent hill. The collection of buildings, devoted to this saint, form a little village of themselves, independently of the small town, which has grown up in the process of time from the pickings and pilgrimages to the sacred shrine.

On the day in question, thousands went out to the church from the city of Mexico. From early in the morning, the magnificent paved road, built to this spot, in the palmy days of the Spanish Empire, was covered with foot-passengers, horsemen, léperos, Indians, grandees in their sumptuous coaches, and in fact by all the population of the town, who could either walk, or afford to ride at their own or others' cost. Not a vehicle was to be had in the Capital for love or money, unless begged or hired on the preceding day.

I went rather late, and found the churches crammed to suffocation, while the Archbishop recited mass, and the President and the high officers of state, seated under a canopy of crimson velvet, in the main body of the building, assisted in the service.

A large portion of the crowd was composed of léperos, in their greasy blankets; and from far and wide in the Department of Mexico, and even from some others, thousands of Indians had come to the festival, with their wives and children. In such a crowd, on a rather warm day, and in a church of ordinary size, you will readily agree with me that the odor was not exactly that of attar of roses—consequently I left them to their devotions; and, with a friend, betook myself to the open air and a survey of the premises.

Yet this could scarcely be called an escape: the crowd without seemed quite as great as that within. In the Plaza, over part of which an awning was spread for a procession at the close of the ceremonies, the Indians had erected booths where they displayed their wares, and were driving a profitable trade in trinkets, pictures of saints, &c.; a mode of speculation which they imitated from the priesthood, who, at the doors of the churches, likewise carried on a brisk business in selling to the faithful slips of crimson ribbon, about two feet long, with a pious inscription, and medals of the Holy Virgin, for sixpence a-piece. I bought one, and passed on.

In the shops around the square were all the unoccupied Mexicans. The church was too small to contain them, and they were necessarily forced to retire to these establishments; where, with their *donzellas* of the *reboso*, they luxuriated on lemonade, oranges, and sweet biscuits, varying their food and flirtations with a choice cigarrito.

At the distance of about two hundred yards from the main edifice, another chapel is erected over a spring of mineral water. This is regarded as a "holy well;" and part of the ceremonial, upon this occasion, is to dip the fingers in the sacred stream, and to make with it a sign of the cross on brow and breast. In all such seasons, none are of course more devout and more conscientious in the performance of this duty than the Indians. They believe that the Virgin herself has specially consecrated the water; and the consequence is, that a simple dip is by no means sufficient. I suppose there could not have been less than three thousand of these Indians in the village, half of whom were constantly pressing, squeezing, shouting, with their women by their sides, and their children, *in full squall*, strapped to their backs; all struggling, either to approach or leave the well. Not satisfied, however, with a dip in the water, they felt it to be a religious duty to wash; and as so many thousands were paddling in maudlin devotion, the well became necessarily fouled, notwithstanding its sacredness. In addition to this, as all could not reach the fountain itself, multitudes were obliged to content themselves with the refuse that drained along the gutters, after having served for the ablutions of the more fortunate. The consequence was, that a more besmeared set of wretches was never displayed, than when the Indians completed their pious lustrations toward evening. But even this did not exhaust their craving appetites for the sacred water; and every one who could buy, borrow, steal, or own a vessel, capable of containing liquids, bore it with him to his distant home full of the turbid flood. It was a panacea for many an ill, and perhaps superior in efficacy to a "blessed candle!"

From the door of the edifice over the well, a steep stairway strikes up the hill side of *Tepeyac*, to a church on the summit; and to this, it is the duty of all to perform a pilgrimage in the course of the day. I followed the steps of the multitude; but as the church was crowded even more densely with natives than the edifice below, I refrained from entering, and sat down on a pile of stones to enjoy a charming view of the Valley

and lakes, slumbering in the misty sunshine, as beautiful as the days of our Indian summer.

The steps and walls that led to this shrine were once in perfect order; but the mountain chapel has been neglected, and suffered to decay since the holy picture was placed in the edifice on the plain, where the *padres* are more comfortably nestled than on the spot of the miraculous gift.

As I gazed down from this elevation, I was struck with the appearance of a curious towering mass of brick and mortar, half way up the hill, that looked in the distance like a sail. Upon inquiry, I learned the following story of its erection.

Many years ago, while a wealthy Mexican was at sea, returning from Old Spain, a violent storm arose, which threatened his vessel with imminent danger. The gale grew gradually stronger; the vessel leaked; every sail was lost, and hope herself seemed to have deserted the ill-starred bark, when the Mexican bethought him of the patron Virgin of his native land. In a moment he was on his knees, with a prayer and a vow to Guadalupe—a vow, that if she listened and saved, he would build in Mexico another temple to her glory! The wind lulled—the sea became calm—a friendly vessel hove in sight—and the drowning crew was rescued.

But with the calm, the worshipper's fervor also relaxed; and on his return, instead of bestowing thousands in the adornment of at least a costly altar to the Virgin, he compromised the matter, by the erection of the *semblance of a sail in brick and mortar* on the ascending wall side! Whether he ever trusted himself at sea again after such faithlessness, the legend does not tell!

While recounting the stories of this spot, it would be improper to omit the legend of the Virgin herself; and in order that it may come with due authority, and not rest alone upon hearsay, I translate the anecdote from a sermon of the Illustrious Cardinal de Lorenzano, Archbishop of Mexico, preached by him in the Collegiate church in 1760.

"In the year 1531, ten years and four months after the conquest of Mexico, the Holy Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on the mountain of Tepeyac. The matter occurred thus: On the 9th of December of that year the adventurous Indian, Juan Diego, a native of Quatititlan, went to Tlaltelolco to study the Christian doctrine, inasmuch as it was there taught by certain holy Franciscan monks. Passing by the mountain, the Most Holy Virgin appeared, and told him to go, in her name, to the Illustrious Bishop Don Francisco Juan de Zummarraga, and say that she desired him to come and worship on that spot. On the 10th of the same month Juan Diego returned to the mountain, and the Holy Virgin again appeared, asking him the result of his commission. Diego replied, that notwithstanding his efforts, he could not obtain admission to the Bishop. Then, the Virgin answered, 'Return, and tell him that I, Mary the Mother of God, have sent you!' Juan Diego carefully executed the

order, but the Señor Zummarraga refused him credence: his only reply being, that he must have some token to satisfy him of the verity of the annunciation. Again Juan Diego returned to the mountain with this message of the Bishop, and delivered it to the Holy Virgin, who appeared to him on the 12th of December *for the third time*. She ordered him then to ascend the mountain of Tepeyac, *cut roses* and bring them to her. The humble and happy messenger went, notwithstanding he knew full well that on the mountain there were not only no roses, but no vegetation of any kind. Nevertheless, *he found the flowers* and brought them to Mary! She threw them in the *tilma* (a part of Indian dress) and said to him, 'Return once more to the Bishop and tell him that these flowers are the credentials of your mission.' Accordingly, Juan Diego immediately departed for the episcopal residence, which, it is said, was then in the house called the Hospital del Amor de Dios; and when he found himself in the presence of the prelate, he unfolded his *tilma* to present the roses, *when, lo! there appeared on the rude garment that blessed picture of the Virgin*, which now after centuries still exists, without having suffered the slightest injury! Then the illustrious Bishop took the image, and placed it in his oratory. It is now in this Collegiate church. The Virgin appeared again, a fourth time, to the Indian. She then restored to health his uncle, named Juan Bernardino, and told Diego—'*The image on thy tilma I wish called the Virgin of Guadalupe!*'"

Such is the story given of the sacred portrait, the original of which presides over the destinies of Mexico; whose name—"*Maria de Guadalupe*"—is given to one half the females of the Republic, and whose shrine is one of the wealthiest in the world. A copy of this picture is hung in every dwelling in Mexico, a household god, as dearly cherished as the little clay images were by the ancient Indians. The motto beneath, "*Non fecit taliter omni Nationi*," is full of pride and consolation.

Toward the close of the services in the church the crowd became less dense, and I ventured within. For the last half hour I obtained a good stand directly in front of the position occupied by General Santa Anna, and an opportunity was thus afforded me of seeing him at his devotions. The same refinement of manner, easy grace, and perfect decorum which characterize the well-bred Mexicans in their dwellings, adhere to them in church; and the President and his little military court fully sustained upon that occasion the reputation of their countrymen.

That night I saw him again at a ball given by General Valencia, in honor of his wife; who, being named "*Maria de Guadalupe*," enjoys this as *her* festal day as well as the saint. The ball, the music, the style, and the supper were all excellent; and although I went with a headache at ten, I did not leave the cheerful walls of the General until the "small hours" of next morning. This ball and supper, I was told by those who prepared it, cost our host the sum of near four thousand dollars, and from this, you may form an opinion of the extravagance of living and

luxuries in Mexico. A similar entertainment could have been given in the United States for less than five hundred.

Some time after the visit to Guadalupe, of which the above is a sketch, I drove out again on a quiet day when there was no ceremonial, to see the establishment undisturbed and at leisure. The *capellan* politely offered to show us over the edifice, and point out the various objects of interest.

He took us first to the sacristy, where are found some badly painted pictures and tinsel figures; and thence to the main body of the church, which, in architectural proportion and chasteness of adornment, is the *neatest* I have seen in Mexico. The ornaments are all green and gold, on a white polished surface, and have just been renewed.

Candles were lighted in front of the miraculous portrait of the Virgin; the capellan knelt for a moment before it, and then drawing aside a curtain, displayed the picture itself.

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE.

The altar at the north end, and the canopy and pillars around it, are of the finest marbles. Above it, in a frame of solid gold, covered with a crystal plate, is the figure of the Virgin painted on the Indian's *tilma*, as represented in the preceding cut. On each side of the image, within the frame and extending its whole length, are strips of gold literally crusted with emeralds, diamonds and pearls. At the feet of the figure there are again large clusters of the same costly gems. From each side of the frame

issues a circle of golden rays, while above it, as if floating in the air, hangs the figure of a dove, of solid silver, as large as an eagle!

Descending from the altar, you lean on a rail of gilded silver. The massive candlesticks, and all the stands and reading-desks are of silver, as is also a score of figures, some three feet high, for lamps and torches.

From the front of the altar to the body of the church, in which are placed the choir and organ, there is another silver hand-rail and balustrade on both sides of the central aisle. The choir is of a dark rich wood, covered with the most exquisite carvings, in high relief, of passages in the life of our Saviour, and its gates are beautifully inlaid with silver. The seats of the clergymen rise above each other in a double row, and in the centre stands a massive reading-desk, most gorgeously wrought of the precious metal.

To the left of the altar, a chapel, containing a collection of sacred relics, branches off from the main edifice. The whole eastern end of this is a blaze of crystal and gilded carvings, piled up to the lofty arched roof; while on the steps are two tall India jars, that would make in Europe the fortune of a china hunter.

As I left the door of this apartment, I noticed a recently painted picture, or rather frame of pictures. It represented a series of miracles wrought by the Virgin within the last ten years. First, a husband had stabbed his wife, and yet, by a prayer to the Saint, she was healed: Second, a child, who had fallen from a window, was miraculously preserved by her intervention: Third, a woman, passing through a wood, encountered a robber, who attempted to force her; yet, an opportune ejaculation to Guadalupe winged her feet, and she escaped: Fourth, a man was thrown from his horse, and saved: Fifth, a carriage passed over another harmlessly: And Sixth, the Virgin saved a woman from being gored by a bull.

As I passed around the church, I saw a variety of similar mementoes hung upon the walls—little pictures of sick women—of others praying—silver arms and legs, and even little waxen ones. In one place I noticed two braids of hair; the vow, doubtless of some poor Indian, and perhaps her most precious gift. I was told in Mexico, by a person who has seen it, that the native Indians at times come to this shrine, and play before the Virgin's image on their drums and flageolets.

As I passed through the door, I encountered a lépero-looking fellow, who, on one side, offered me a ticket in the "Lottery of the Virgin," while on the other, a servitor of the church held out a stock of red ribbons "with the measure of the Virgin's hands," and metal medals of Guadalupe. The latter I thought a better investment than the lottery; and buying one, which I dipped in the blessed well, I keep it as a memento of the visit and the spot.

For the curious in such matters, I give the original of a Sonnet and Verses—and the promise of Indulgences, in honor of the Virgin:

A MARIA SANTISIMA DE GUADALUPE.

SONETO.

Esa GUADALUPANA encantadora,
Madre del Hombre Dios y tambien mia,
Bajó del CIELO al *Tepeyac* un dia
Para ser nuestra insigne Bienhechora.
A la presencia de tan Gran SEÑORA
Fugó la sanguinaria *Idolatría*,
Como la pavorosa *Noche* humbría
A los primeros rasgos de la *Aurora*.
Al Dios *Huitziloposthli* destrozaron;
Los demás *Idolillos* demolieron;
Y á JESUS en sus templos colocaron:
Los Pueblos á su voz se convirtieron;
Y cuanto en la *Conquista* les quitaron:
En *tres centurias* por MARIA obtuvieron.

En tres siglos cuántas cosas
El tiempo cruel devoró!....
Los montes; los altos montes
Mudaron de situacion.
Solo esa COPIA divina
Cual el dia en que se formó
Permanece en un *Ayate;*
Como que es obra de Dios.
A su MADRE, ESPOSA E HIJA
Por sí mismo la pintó,
Donándola á los *Indianos*
En prueba fiel de su amor.
Esto ciertamente no hizo
Con ninguna otra nacion:
Bendito sea una y mil veces
Por tan insigne favor.
Démosle todos las gracias,
Y sea la iluminacion,
Las salvas y los repiques,
Y los écos del tambor:
La prueba de nuestro afecto;
Y un indicio de que en nos
Nunca entibiará el impío
La pristina devocion.

Se suplica el adorno ó iluminacion en el Novenario; y se advierte á los fieles que los Illmos. Sres. Obispos de Puebla y Tarazona, concedieron 80 dias de indulgencia en cada cuarto de hora en que dichas Imágenes se espongan; y por cada Ave María que se rezare delante de cualquiera de ellas 500 dias: lo mismo se gana diciendo Ave María, ó solicitando devotos.=Ultimamente, el Illmo. Sr. D. Fr. José María de Jesus Belaunzarán por sí, y los Illmos. Sres. Obispos actuales de Puebla, Michoacán, Jalisco y Durango concedió 200 dias de indulgencia por cada palabra de los devocionarios de la Sma. Sra.; por cada paso que se diere en su obsequio; por cada una de las reverencias que se le hagan; y por cada palabra de la misa que en su obsequio el sacerdote y los gyentes digeren. Otros tantos dias concede por cada cuarto de hora en que se espongan las Efigies en los balcones, ventanas o puertas para la adoracion públicа.

LETTER XIII.

COURT CEREMONIES. GENERAL SANTA ANNA. DIPLOMATIC DINNER.

For some time after the installation of General Santa Anna as Provisional President of Mexico, under the system known in the political history of that country as the "Plan of Tacubaya,"* a difficulty existed between the Government, and Ministers of foreign nations, as to the etiquette which was to be observed on public occasions when it became necessary for them to meet ceremoniously. To such an extent had this variance of established rules been carried, that upon the consecration of the present Archbishop, the Envoy from France deemed it proper to mark his disapprobation, by retiring with his legation from the Cathedral.

These matters, which to us republicans seemed of no very great moment except as they had been rendered so by the Mexicans themselves, were, however, at length satisfactorily arranged; and on the first of January, 1842, the members of the different missions were invited to meet the President in the morning, for the purpose of exchanging the usual courtesies of the day, and to partake of a dinner in the evening. This invitation was sent with all due form through his Excellency, Mr. De Bocanegra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As the system of entertainment at table is quite a novelty in Mexican diplomacy, the invitation was entirely unexpected; and it was hailed by the whole corps as indicative of an agreeable change in our future intercourse.

Accordingly at noon on the first of January, the diplomatic body, in full uniform, met at the apartments of the Minister of Foreign Relations in the Palace. Here again, some trifling question of etiquette was started relative to the precedence of the Archbishop, which being arranged, the corps, as soon as it had been joined by the Ministers of State, was ushered to the hall of audience by an aid-de-camp of the President. Passing

* The revolution of 1841, after several fruitless battles, in which victory seems to have crowned neither side, and several as fruitless interviews of the Chiefs and messengers of the different parties, was at length terminated by a meeting of commanding officers at Tacubaya on the 28th of September, when a plan was agreed upon and signed by 191 persons, by means of which the existing Constitution of Mexico was superseded. By this system, or "Plan of Tacubaya," consisting of 13 articles, a general amnesty was proclaimed—a call of a new Congress to form a Constitution agreed upon—and a *Junta* created, to be named by the General in Chief of the Army. The Junta was to elect the Provisional President, who, by the 7th article, was clothed "*with all the powers necessary to reorganize the nation and all the branches of administration*;" or, in other words, with supreme power. That General was Santa Anna. He selected the Junta, and the Junta returned the compliment by selecting him!

along several balconies hung against the wall of the inner court-yard, we soon reached an antechamber filled with all the chief personages, both military and civil, of the Republic, and we were at once conducted to the reception-room. This is a large and newly furnished apartment, plainly painted in fresco; its walls are hung with ordinary oil pictures of the history of Napoleon, and the floor is covered with a rather common carpet.

At the south end of the room a Chair of State, with the flags and arms of Mexico richly embroidered in gold and colors on its velvet cushions, was placed for the President, under a canopy of crimson edged with gold. On either side of this, against the wall, were chairs for the four Ministers, and, immediately in front of the President's seat, running the length of the room, beneath the great chandelier, were ranged two rows of chairs facing each other, for the diplomatic corps. Here we took our stand, according to the rank and length of residence of the respective Envoys in the country.

In a few moments, the Ministers of State (who had retired after we were placed,) entered from a room behind the audience-chamber, and were directly followed by General Santa Anna, in the full uniform of the Chief of the Army—blue and red, richly embroidered with gold. You are aware, that at the battle of Vera Cruz with the French, in the year 1838, one of his legs was shattered by a cannon-ball, as he pursued the enemy on their retreat to their boats. The limb was badly amputated, and of course he limps along on a wooden substitute, with the aid of a cane. But the defect does not take from the dignity and manliness of his air and carriage.

He advanced to his chair under the canopy; his Ministers placed themselves on either side of him, and the room, which had hitherto been only occupied by ourselves, was, at a signal to the aid-de-camp in waiting, filled with a brilliant *cortège* of officers in full dress uniforms.

As soon as silence and order were obtained, the President bowed gracefully to us, and received an obeisance in return. Mr. Pakenham, the British Envoy, as the oldest resident Minister, then advanced, and in the name of the diplomatic body, made an address of congratulation in Spanish.

The General listened with attention and interest, and when the Minister had concluded, replied briefly, but with considerable hesitation of manner and an awkward twisting of his cane and chapeau, showing that he was, at least on that occasion, more of the soldier than the speaker. As he seated himself after concluding his reply, he motioned us to our chairs, while the rest of the spectators still remained standing. A short conversation then followed between him, Mr. Pakenham, and Mr. Olivér, the Spanish Envoy, who were immediately in front of him; and at the first pause we rose, advanced to him singly and bowed; walking slowly to the door at the north end of the apartment, we turned on its sill and bowed again, both of the salutations being gracefully returned by him: and thus ended the morning visit of ceremonious congratulation.

I have been so minute in repeating to you the details of this ceremony, not because I deem any account of bows and formal speeches interesting to a reader; but because such a scene has occurred in a *Republic*, before the President of a *Republic*, and in a National Palace surrounded with soldiery, amid the beating of drums, the braying of trumpets, and all the paraphernalia of a court. Such a detail sounds oddly to one who—entering a door often opened without a porter—passing through no lines of grim guards—amid no military pomp or parade—approaches the President of our own more favored land, and finds him seated in his plain parlor, by a comfortable grate, habited in neat but homely dress; and ready, without ceremony, to grasp your hand and welcome you to his fireside.

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We left the Palace at one o'clock, and entering our carriage, proceeded to pay the customary visits of form to all our friends, on the first of January. We found numbers of people at home, and left a corresponding quantity of cards for those who were engaged in the same duty as ourselves.

It was a pleasure to reach home once more, and to get rid of the stiff uniform in which my limbs had been cased for several hours. Accustomed all my life to the plain and easy coat of civil life, and donning gold lace that day for the first time, I felt, I suppose, very much the sensations of "the hog in armor;" and I was glad after that essay, to find but few occasions on which full dress was requisite.

As the bell tolled for Oracion, Mr. Ellis and myself mounted the carriage once more, and soon reached the Palace.

In the anteroom, two aids-de-camp of the President met and conducted us to the audience-room, now brilliantly lighted with lamps and chandeliers. The saloon was sprinkled over with a gay company of officers and diplomats in full dress. Santa Anna soon entered from his private apartments, and taking a seat near the upper end of the room, his friends gathered sociably around him. As soon as all were seated, Mr. Ellis presented me privately to him. He took my hand in both of his, and with an air of great cordiality and a winning smile, addressed me some complimentary words, inviting us to take seats near him.

The total repose and quietness of the company was precisely what I desired. It afforded me an opportunity to take a sort of *mind portrait* of the Warrior President; and seated for an hour within the sound of his voice, at the distance of a few feet, I had an excellent opportunity to do so. His demeanor in conversation is mild, earnest and gentlemanly. He uses much gentle gesture as soon as he becomes animated, and seems to speak with all his soul, without losing command over himself and his feelings.

I have since seen Santa Anna in his coach, surrounded with guards and all the pomp of the military, at the review of 8000 troops; in church

at prayer; in the ball-room; in the cock-pit, betting; in the audience-room; at the banquet; and in private interviews of delicate diplomacy, when the political interests of the two nations were at stake. No one can easily forget him; and I have delayed describing him until now because I have been unwilling to deceive myself or others. According to public opinion, he is a riddle in *character;* he surely is not so *in appearance*, and if his person and his manners are not, as with others, to be taken as a fair index of the man, he is either an arch-hypocrite, or a capital actor.

In person, General Santa Anna is about six feet high, well made, and of graceful bearing, though he stumps along on an old-fashioned wooden peg, rejecting, as uncomfortable, all the "mock legs" with patent springs and self-moving inventions, which have been presented to him by his flatterers from all parts of the world. His dress, as I have said before, is on all public occasions that of a high officer of the army; and his breast is covered with richly-gemmed decorations.

His brow, shaded with black hair somewhat sprinkled with gray, is by no means lofty, but narrow and smooth. Although his whole head is rather small, and perhaps rather too long for its breadth, it has, however, a marked and boldly-defined outline, indicating talent and resolution. His nose is straight and well shaped, and his brows knit in a line over close and brilliant eyes, which are said to flash with fire when aroused to passion. His complexion is dark and sallow, and his temperament evidently bilious. His mouth is the most remarkable feature. Its prominent expression, when at rest, is that of mingled pain and anxiety. In perfect repose, you would think him looking on a dying friend, with whose sufferings he was deeply but helplessly sympathizing. His head and face are those of an attentive, thoughtful, melancholy but determined character. There is no ferocity, vindictiveness, or ill-temper in his expression; and when his countenance is lighted up by pleasant conversation, in which he appears to enter eagerly though with a timid and subdued voice; and when he puts on a sweetly wooing smile, which seems too tranquil ever to ripen into a laugh; you feel that you have before you a man, who would be singled from a thousand for his quiet refinement and serious temper; one who would at once command your sympathy and your respect; a well-bred gentleman, and a resolute soldier, who can win by the solicitation of an insinuating address, or rule by the authority of an imperious spirit.

Such is a portrait of the man who, since the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, has played a chief part in the drama of the time, and has fought and forced his way to eminence from the humblest rank. The destroyer and builder up of many systems and men, he has not always been on the side of republicanism, according to the liberal and enlightened notions of the North; but it is sincerely to be hoped, that he is too deeply pledged as an old soldier and brave fighter in the cause of liberty, now to shrink back into the folly of despotism.

While the hour passed in which I sat looking at and listening to this remarkable person, the company in the saloon gradually thickened. Here a newly made Colonel, the child of the *new* revolution, in as new and bright a uniform; there a veteran General, in the time-stained dress, tarnished trappings, and old cut coat of the *ancient régime*. Here a knot of European diplomatists, blazing with their stars; and there the old Archbishop, with his venerable gray locks falling on his violet robes, while another dignitary of the church stood by him in velvet and lace, with a cross of large diamonds and topazes hung round his priestly throat by a collar of gems, and "ever and anon" taking snuff, in a manner that displayed a finger which almost blinded by the flash of its diamonds. The dress of every person in the room, in fact, was rich and tasteful, except that of one distinguished citizen of Mexico, and a priest in attendance on the Archbishop—who adhered, amid all the show, to humble and respectable black.

After an hour's delay, which added to the sharpness of our poorly stayed appetites, dinner was announced. Santa Anna led the way, and in the dining-room we found our places indicated by cards on the soup-plates.

The table-service was tolerably good, although there was no such display either of silver, porcelain, or cut-glass, as we see on hundreds of less courtly tables in the North; nor were there any "gold spoons" for Congressmen to cavil with. The cookery (French and English,) was capital, and the courses innumerable.* The wines and the conversation went off with spirit; and, indeed, the whole entertainment was most agreeable, except, that during the repast *six of the President's aids-de-camp stood behind his chair*. Their position was, I feel confident, most painful, (at least to all the foreigners;) and although they performed no menial offices, yet the act was inelegant, unrepublican, unnecessary, and in excessively bad taste. I hope never again to be forced to witness such a scene, nor to sit at table while such men stand.

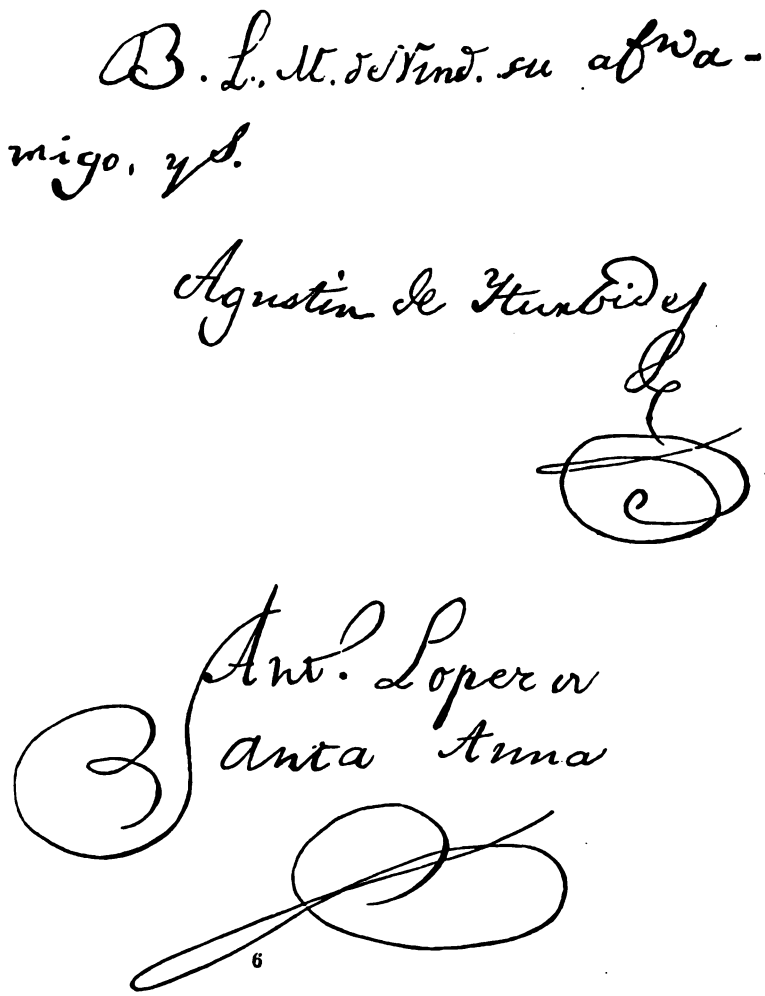
Thus passed two hours and a half, enlivened by the military bands of the Palace, playing gay airs with remarkable taste and skill in the pauses. Near ten we all retired (without the *universal* cigar) to the reception-room, where tea and coffee were handed before we departed.

As we passed the windows of the dining-room, we saw the *aids-de-camp* at dinner in our lately deserted places; and I sincerely trust as they had so long but feasted on the fumes of our earlier dinner, that they had something more substantial than the cold and broken remains of our splendid repast.

In the palace yard below, hundreds of soldiers were lolling drowsily on the stone seats, or bundled up in their blankets stretched on the pavement within the gateways; and as we left the portal, the band in the balconies above sent over the still square the parting strains of its beautiful music.

* This entertainment was prepared by a celebrated French cook in Mexico, who charged the moderate sum of $25 a head for forty persons, *exclusive* of the wines.

I made several efforts while in Mexico, to procure a portrait of General Santa Anna for the purpose of presenting it to you; but I could find no engraving or lithograph, and the oil pictures were most wretchedly executed, without doing justice to his very characteristic face. In this age of autographs, however, when all persons collect, and some few even undertake to read a man's mind in his signature; I have thought that those of the President and of the late Emperor Iturbide, might not be uninteresting, and I therefore subjoin them. That of Santa Anna is a firm, clear, and distinct one; while Iturbide's, though strong and decided enough in its lines, has still a straggling manner, which indicates perhaps too much the weakness of many parts of that hero's character.



LETTER XIV.

ST. AUGUSTIN DE LAS CUEVAS, AND THE FEAST OF SAN AUGUSTIN. GAMBLING AND COCK-FIGHTING.

San Augustin is one of the most charming villages in the neighborhood of Mexico. It lies, like most of the other villages, at the foot of the mountains, south of the city, and is reached by a level road about twelve miles long, leading through some of the most beautiful farms in the Valley. Here, not only are immense herds of cattle grazed and large quantities of grain cultivated, but you see extensive plantations of the *maguey aloe*, or Agave Americana, from which the favorite drink of the natives is made, in the valleys of Puebla and Mexico.*

When the plant reaches the age of seven years, it is usually ready to bloom. Upon the appearance of the first symptoms of a bud, the centre stalk is cut out, and a bowl hollowed in the middle of the large leaves; into this, for several days, the juice of the plant exudes plentifully; and as the bowl fills at certain periods during the day, it is sucked into a long gourd by the Indian laborers, who transfer it from this to hog-skins. In these it is taken to the haciendas, slightly fermented in large vats lined with bull-hides, whence it is again transferred to skins, and so carried to the city or the shops and sold. It is really amusing, thus to behold the skin of a stout porker injected with the heady liquid—his legs sticking out, and even the remnant of his tail twisting with its wonted curve!

The cultivation of the maguey is one of the most profitable in the Valley; the outlay is calculated generally at about two dollars per plant, and the return is from seven to ten, according to the size of it. I cannot say that the flavor is pleasant, though it varies greatly in different parts of the country. I have tasted some in Mexico that had been sent as a present from a hacienda near Puebla, which was delicious; but the ordinary liquid sold in the shops, seemed to me very like sour lemonade improved by the addition of cream-of-tartar. It was like the famous wine of one of the vallies that pours its stream into the Rhine, with which the old women of that neighborhood *darn their stockings*. One drop, it is said, put on any ordinary hole, draws it up for ever and securely like a purse-string!

* This plant is one of the most useful in Mexico. It makes an excellent *fence* while it is growing: after it arrives at perfection, *pulque* is extracted from its stalk: the leaves are then either cut up as food for animals, or are manufactured into rope, twine, coarse Indian cloth, or wrapping-paper of unequalled toughness

The road to St. Augustin is remarkably insecure from robbers; many persons have been attacked, and there are still several suspicious spots where the rascals are supposed to hover on the watch. I therefore never ventured out except with a large company, or on days when some public amusement was likely to fill the country with strangers.

The 16th of May is set down in the calendar as the day of the year dedicated to St. Augustin, and this village is appropriated by the Mexicans to the celebration of his festival. Yet, unlike most other festivals, this one appears to have little or nothing to do, either with religion or the saint, unless they have a version of his story unknown to other nations.

As on the occasion of the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the road was filled, after daylight, with passengers in coaches, on horseback, in diligences, and even on foot. This is a frolic, chiefly for the great, the wealthy and the fashionable, (as those of Los Remedios and the Virgin, are for the mass of the people,) and *gambling* is the chief bait and attraction.

The square in the centre of the village was fitted up with temporary booths, and devoted to all sorts of festivity, play and music, for the lower classes, while many of the adjoining dwellings were adorned in magnificent style for the upper ranks who sported nothing but gold and silver.

Indeed, a chance is offered to all upon this occasion. Every man who has anything to lose, or the hope of winning, has the opportunity presented. There is no lack of temptation.

First, there are the humblest booths in the square where small sums of copper alone are played; next, there are others where copper and *reals*, or *medios*, are permitted; next, those for copper and dollars; then roulette, for all stakers; then banks of silver alone; then banks of silver and gold; and lastly, banks where nothing but gold, and that usually in *doubloons*, is ever ventured. You thus perceive, that the opportunity is liberally presented for every man's purse to become "small by degrees and beautifully less."

It is estimated that 25,000 doubloons or $400,000, are annually placed in these banks, and, as at least half that sum is brought on the ground to bet against them, the amount of money lost and won is enormous. This year *all the banks lost except one*, and its owners were exceedingly dissatisfied because their winnings, during the three days of the festival, amounted to only 25 per cent.; yet you will imagine how great must have been their gains, when this very bank had at one time *lost near two thousand doubloons!*

The saloons where gold is played are most tastefully fitted up in cool and airy situations. A long table, covered with green cloth, is placed in the centre, and in the middle of this lie the shining heaps, rolls, and piles of gold. Around, sit the patient and silent players. You do not see, as in France, the iron lip, frowning brow, pale visage, and clenched hand—indicative of anxiety, remorse, and the lust of greedy gain. The

Spaniard takes it with the *nonchalance* of eastern fatalism. Nothing disconcerts, disturbs, or forces him to utter an exclamation of pleasure or a sigh of pain—but he sits in stoic silence receiving his *ounces*, if he win, without eagerness, or seeing them swell the bank without sorrow, if he lose.

The game of *monté* has become part of the very nature of the inhabitants of Southern America. Accustomed in the olden times under the Colonial Government, to immense wealth, "wealth (as the old people describe it,) in which they literally swam," gold lost its value and became but a counter, by means of which they passed their idle hours in an agreeable excitement that never ruffled or elated them. This habitual regard for the game has descended from sire to son, and the keeping of a table, or its ownership, is not esteemed disreputable, as in other countries. On the contrary, the largest sums are avowedly furnished by most respectable bankers, and the sport is held to be a species of legitimate trade.

Yet, great is the distress produced in Mexico by gambling. While a hundred establishments are opened in St. Augustin for three days, there are not less than *hundreds*, in the city of Mexico, open *daily* during the whole year! The consequence is, that although the wealthiest and boldest betters, who venture their 200, 400, or even 1000 doubloons on a single card at St. Augustin, play only there, or but once or twice a year, yet the constant drain on the small gamblers is kept up day after day and night after night in the Capital. Is it to be wondered then, amid a nation of such habits—so prodigal, proud, and easily ruined, that persons who venture and lose their all on a single stake, or habitually live by the risks of fortune, betake themselves at last to the road, and rob with the pistol instead of the cards? Both are short cuts to fortune or the gallows.

We adjourned, at two o'clock, from the gambling-houses to the COCK-PIT. The President, General Santa Anna, and General Bravo, with their suites, occupied one of the centre boxes of the theatre, while the rest were filled with the beauty and fashion of Mexico. It is the vogue for women of family and respectability to attend these festivals, their great object being to outshine each other in the splendor and variety of their garments. The rage is to have one dress for mass at ten o'clock, one for the cock-pit, another for the ball at the Calvario, and a fourth for the ball in the evening. *These again must be different on each succeeding day of the festival!*

The cocks were brought into the centre of the pit within the ring, the President's fowls being generally those first put on the earth. They were then thrown off for a spring at each other, and taken up again before the betting began. Brokers went round, proclaiming the amount placed in their hands to bet on any particular fowl. Whenever a bet was offered

against Santa Anna's bird, the broker was called to his box and an *aid-de-camp* covered it. Besides these bets, the General usually had some standing ones agreed on beforehand with the owners of other cocks; and in this manner five or six thousand dollars were lost or won by him in the pit daily. Seven mains of cocks were fought each day—the President seeming to relish the sport vastly, while his aids were highly excited, and the ladies looked on with evident gusto.

Nothing can be more grossly mean than a passion for cock fighting. A bull fight, brutal and bloody as it is, has still something noble in the contest between the man and the animal; there is a trial of skill, and often a trial for life. Horse racing is a beautiful sport, it is both exciting and useful; and the breed of a noble animal is cherished and improved by it. But to see grown men, and among them the chiefs of a nation, sit down quietly to watch two birds kick each other to death with slashers and spurs, in order to make money out of the victory of one of them, is too contemptible to be sanctioned or apologized for in any way, except by old traditionary customs. Such were the old customs of Mexico. Their fathers gambled—they gamble. Their fathers fought fowls—they fight fowls; and if you speak to them of it, they shrug their shoulders, with a "*pues que?*"—"what will you?"

It is with pleasure, however, that I record one pleasant scene at least in this festival of St. Augustin. On the second day I did not go out early in the morning, but took a place in the diligence at half-past two P. M., reaching the village in a couple of hours. Disgusted with the gambling scenes and the cock-pit, I went only to see the Calvario, or ball given every afternoon at the Calvary, which adjoins the village on the west.

We walked to this spot through beautiful lanes of Oriental-looking houses, bowered among groves of orange and jasmine, and arrived about six o'clock. As the people were just assembling we strolled up the green hills, traversed by streams of crystal water, until we reached an eminence above the village, bosomed in an eternal shade, from which peeped out the white walls of the houses and azotéas, covered with the most beautiful and fragrant flowers. Across the valley, the eye rested on the silvery line of Tezcoco, and as the slanting rays of the sun fell over the soft midland-view, and athwart the hills through the gaps of the western mountains, lighting the ravines, and throwing the bold peaks in shadow, I thought I had never beheld a more perfect picture drawn from fancy of the peace and beauty of a "Happy Valley." It was soon enlivened by figures, and became a scene worthy of the fairy fancy of Watteau.

From the top of Calvary, the hill-side sloped down amphitheatrically to a level meadow, a bow-shot in width, closed on the east and west by trees in their freshest foliage, and terminated at the north by a garden and azotéa just peeping over the leaves of an orange grove. On the side of

the hill, seats had been placed for ladies, which were speedily filled by them attired in full dress for the evening. The fine military band of the garrison struck up directly in the centre of the sward, and in a moment the dancers were on foot. Galopades, waltzes, cotillons, Spanish dances —succeeded each other rapidly. It was difficult to say which was the more beautiful display—that of Mexican beauty tripping it with gay cavalier "to music on the green," or that of Mexican beauty lining the hill-side, and watching the festive scene with its pensive gaze.

The dance continued until twilight, when the crowd moved off to town, in carriages and on foot. In a moment all was bustle, and as I gained the road, I was a little astonished to see the hosts of beggars who were there to meet the returning mass of roystering lads, and gleesome fair ones. Nor were these, alone, the beggars of St. Augustin—the city had poured out its complement; all my well-known acquaintances were present, anxious to pick up the "crumbs from the rich man's table," and, for ought I know, to venture some of them slyly in the booths of the square. As this tide of joyous life swept home, I could not help noticing one of these wretches, who threw himself actually in the pathway of the returning multitude, and *rolled* along the road in such a manner that it became impossible to pass without treading on or over him. It was the old howling beggar of the Alameda: kicks, cuffs, stumbles availed nothing; still he rolled, and still he howled.

Such is the contrast presented continually between enormous wealth and squalid misery in the Republic of Mexico!

LETTER XV.

REVOLUTION. WAX-FIGURES. VISIT TO THE MUSEUM. ANTIQUITIES.

It was just after the conclusion of the Revolution of 1841, which resulted in placing General Santa Anna at the head of the Government, that I arrived in the city of Mexico, and found the marks of the struggle that took place on that memorable occasion, yet visible in the streets. For a month the city had been in a state of siege; General Bustamante, the Constitutional President, occupying the National Palace, and holding possession of portions of the town with his troops, while General Valencia controlled the citadel, from which he cannonaded and threw shells into the city. During all this time the work of slaughter went on; but the chief injury was inflicted on harmless non-combatants, who happened at times to pass exposed places, or to cross streets which were raked by the artillery. Numbers of poor laborers, and laborers' wives, bringing them food, were thus destroyed; and during the whole of the period I remained in the Capital, the scars and indentations made by the balls and bullets in the walls of the *Calle Refugio*, were never repaired. From the tops of houses, too, death was dealt by the insurgents. Screening themselves behind the parapet walls of azotéas, and frequently in church-towers, they shot down, indiscriminately, all who passed, and made the sureness of aim a matter of boast and joke. In the Revolution or *émeute* of the previous year, General Valencia had thus well nigh fallen victim to some reckless marksman. As he passed along one of the streets, at the head of his troops—at a moment, too, when no attack was meditated—a solitary rifleman sent a ball from a steeple through his *chapeau*. The General keeps the hat as a sort of military trophy.

Upon the azotéa of the house occupied by the Prussian Chargé d'Affaires, a man was slain early one morning, by a shot from the azotéa of the opposite convent of the Profesa; yet, so incessant was the firing, that the family was prevented from coming to his succor or removing the body for several hours.

Thus did that fearful struggle degenerate into murder within the city walls, while the horrors of civil war were enhanced by a bombardment and cannonade from the citadel, under a commander who, until within a few days, had enjoyed the highest confidence of the Constitutional Government.

It is sincerely to be hoped, that the lesson taught at this epoch has disgusted the nation with these bloody turmoils. There appears among the

people a general desire for peace; and the wise, just, and thoughtful of all parties, can surely agree upon some plan to satisfy the common interests, to quell the inordinate passions of military chieftains, and, in fine, to terminate for ever these dreadful scenes. In treating hereafter of the political condition of Mexico, I shall have occasion to refer again to this subject, and shall then do so more fully.

These ideas struck me as I went for the first time to the University, and saw even the front of that edifice, which should naturally be sacred to learning and peace, pierced with cannon balls and bullets. The walls only, I believe, were injured. Indeed, from the appearance of the houses throughout the city, I am inclined to think that the Mexicans were either exceedingly bad marksmen, or, that they aimed high, if they aimed at all, to prevent carnage. The plaster and stones, and the poor non-combatants were evidently the greatest sufferers, while the soldiers seem to have had an amiable compassion for each other!

The UNIVERSITY is a fine old monastic building, erected around a court-yard of large dimensions, in the centre of which is now placed the colossal bronze statue of Charles IV. cast in the city of Mexico by Tolsa, a Mexican artist. This really beautiful work formerly stood in the great square fronting the Cathedral, where its huge mass was more in proportion to the surrounding space and objects.

STATUE OF CHARLES IV.

The statue is Equestrian. The monarch is represented in Roman costume, his brow bound with a wreath of laurel, and in the act of curbing his horse with his left hand, while his right extends a truncheon. An antique sword rests on his thigh, and an imperial robe flows in easy folds from his shoulders covering the haunches of the horse, who is moving forward, and trampling on a quiver of arrows. The face of Charles was not remarkable for dignity or command, so that, in order to preserve the resemblance, the artist has been obliged to throw all the *power* of his work into the figure. But the result has been a statue of great majesty, and worthy of the most judicious praise. Although the model of the horse is certainly good, and the dimensions well preserved in the colossal size, yet it is quite evident that the artist had only the Mexican animal in his mind's eye when he moulded his masterpiece. The chief defects, as well as I was able to judge in its present unfavorable position, were disproportions in the neck and haunches; the former being entirely too thick and large, while the latter are too heavy and small, both for the legs of the animal and the figure they support. The drapery of the sovereign, the saddle-cloth, sword, bridle, a Medusa head on the martingale, and all the accessories, are admirably finished in the highest style of art. One of the most severe and tasteful critics who ever saw it, compares this work of the native Mexican with the famous statue of Marcus Aurelius at Rome, which has so frequently been the theme of praise by the most learned sculptors of the Old World.

Indeed, the art of imitating nature in statuary, is a talent perhaps nowhere more common than in Mexico. I do not mean by this, that fine sculpture is common there; but I know of few places where there is more talent to produce it.

The moment a stranger arrives in Mexico he is besieged by a host of *wax-figure* makers, with small statues of the costumes and trades of the country. These, it is true, are cast in moulds, but the talent is not the less remarkable. They are admirably executed. Dress, feature, demeanor, action, are all caught and faithfully depicted to the very life, and no collection can be more worthily adorned than by a series of these figures. You can obtain them of any size, or any subject; and although the materials are frail, they may be safely transported from the Capital to the coast. If these *statuettes* are wonderful, their makers are not less so. You would be astonished to see the artist, who produces a gem of a figure which in Europe would command a couple of doubloons. A little room up two pairs of ricketty stairs, just large enough to turn in, where his wife cooks and sleeps with two or three children in one corner; while he, with his lump of wax and his portable furnace, stands working, moulding and dressing his figures in another. Such is the atélier, while the man himself, is scarcely distinguishable from the commonest *léperos*.

* * * * * *

Until recently, there were in the city of Puebla two sisters, remarkable for the manufacture of *figures from rags*. These ladies were of respectable birth, and always commanded a ready sale for their works, which were sought for even in Europe. They moulded the figures of lumps of beeswax, covered the different parts of the body with *cotton cloth* of colors suited to the complexion, and, while the wax was yet soft, moulded the features into the required expression, completing the representation with appropriate dresses. I have two of these in my possession, which, in point of character, are worthy of the pencil of Teniers. They represent an old Indian woman, scolding and weeping over her drunken son. The grief and age of the one, and the tipsy leer, roll of the head, and want of command over the limbs of the other, are rendered with indescribable faithfulness. One of these remarkable artists died while I was in Mexico, and the other is extremely old and feeble, so that it has now become a matter of great difficulty to obtain a specimen of her works; nor can they hereafter be as perfect as formerly, as the sister who died was remarkable for her perfection in *forming* the figures, while the greater talent of finishing and giving *expression*, was the task of the survivor. Both duties now devolve on her, and what with age and the loss of her companion, her hand seems to have lost much of its cunning.

* * * * * *

But let us retrace our way to the Museum.

Turning from the statue of Charles IV. in the centre of the court-yard, to the left-hand side of the quadrangle, you observe the arcades at that end covered with panels of wood, ten or fifteen feet high, and apparently filled with boxes, old bookcases, old stones, and a quantity of lumber. A *real* to the porter will, however, admit you to the inclosure, and you will be surprised to find amid that mass of filth, dirt, and refuse furniture, relics of antiquity for which thousands would be gladly paid by the British Museum, the Louvre, the Glyptotheca of Munich, or, indeed, by any enlightened Sovereign, who possessed the taste to acquire and the money to purchase.

You see a mimic tree, with a stuffed bear climbing up it; a bleached and hairless tiger-skin dangling from the ceiling; half-a-dozen Indian dresses made of snake-skins, fluttering on the wall; and, amid all this confusion, towers aloft the grand and hideous Indian idol of TEOYAOMIQUI; the great STONE OF SACRIFICE, (with a stone cross now erected in the middle to sanctify it;) the celebrated statue of the INDIO TRISTE, not long since disinterred; a colossal head of serpentine, in the Egyptian style of sculpture; the two carvings of the Feathered Serpents, already described in my letter on Cholula; while, on the benches around the walls, and scattered over the floor, are numberless figures of dogs, monkeys, lizards,

birds, serpents, all in seemingly inextricable confusion and utter neglect.

As you enter the gate of the inclosure, the stone that first strikes your view is represented in the following sketch.

It is a huge mass of serpentine, a stone now rarely found in the Republic. This curious head* was discovered in the year 1837, in the street of St. Teresa, on the site of an old Indian Palace, the tradition of which records it to have been the residence of Montezuma's father. It is a yard broad and twenty-nine inches high. The carving is admirably well executed, and strangers are struck with the strong resemblance it bears, both in its massiveness and demure style, to the statues of ancient Egypt. Bustamante, one of the most learned of the modern antiquarians of Mexico, asserts it to be the god of Baths. Gondra, the director of the National Museum, on the other hand, alleges it to be the god of Night—the half shut eyes, and sealed mouth, bearing him out in his hypothesis.

Next to this are the "Sacrificial Stone," and the idol "Teoyaomiqui," of which I shall treat in a separate letter. Beyond them is the following curious figure,

* Sometimes called "Centeoti," sometimes "Temazcalteci."

found on the Hill of Tezcosingo, near the town of Tezcoco, on the eastern side of the lake. The Indians from that portion of the country say that it represents the God of Silence. The mouth, where the lines in the cut mark a square, is painted red on the statue, but Mr. Gondra believes that the color was added by the Indian who discovered it. Next to this is

PERRO MUDO

a figure of the PERRO MUDO—or dumb dog. This carving was also found in the Calle de St. Teresa, and was doubtless an Indian idol. Silent dogs, were said to have been plentiful at the period of the Spanish conquest; and, although they have been destroyed for food, in the southern and middle parts of Mexico, they are still found, it is alleged, among the Apaché Indians. The figure is of basalt, like the god of Silence, and is one foot and ten inches high.

By the side of the "Perro Mudo," on the bench against the wall, is an Indian Mortar;

the edge of the bowl is surrounded, as you perceive, by the figure of a coiled serpent, exquisitely carved in basalt. Next to this is a head, also beautifully cut in the same material.

I was unable to find any one who could explain its signification, or inform me of the place where it was discovered.

But of all the figures within this inclosure, none struck me so much as that of the INDIO TRISTE—or "Sad Indian."

This remarkable statue was discovered behind the Palace, beneath the street which now bears its name. It is three feet four inches high, and two feet broad, and was disinterred in the year 1828. It is rather the figure of a surly, than a sad Indian. His brows are drawn together with anger. His eyes are wide and glaring. His tongue is slightly protruded from the mouth. Around his neck is a cape of feathers, and his feet are sandalled. His hands are joined by the points of the fingers, and an aperture is thus left to insert a staff or pole—the bottom of which evidently rested in a socket cut in the base of the statue, between the feet, as indicated in the engraving. This figure was probably set on the wall, or at the portal of some edifice, and in his hand was erected a banner or insignia of command. There is a fixed, stony gaze of imperturbable surliness and impudence in the face, which always struck me as making it one of the most characteristic remains in the Museum.

Although there is ample material around me for further illustration of the curious idolatry of the ancient Indians, I will not trouble you with more sketches at present, and conclude this part of my description of the Museum by simply saying, that the remainder of the idols are chiefly images of dogs, monkeys, lizards, and rabbits—the proportions of which

are greatly exaggerated, so as to make them deformed and hideous. If their worship was a worship of pure propitiation, they seem to have adopted the idea of the Chinese, and prayed rather to the Evil principle of things than to the Good. "God is too good," said a Chinese to me once—"God is too good to hurt us, but Ki—the Devil—will; I therefore pray to the devil to let me alone!"

It may be readily imagined that people, in the dawn of religious ideas, will personify every ill that assails them under the shape in which it becomes most annoying. They imagine when they are assailed by serpents, that the Evil principle vexes them in that form; when their houses are overrun with lizards, that the demon has attacked them in another shape; and thus, according to their simple reasoning, it was wise to manifest their ideas of this wicked Spirit in statues of the disguises he had himself selected, and under those forms to appease him by worship and offerings. It is by imagining a system of this nature, that we can alone account for the extraordinary and fanciful creations of Mexican art which have been preserved until our day and generation.

LETTER XVI.

THE MUSEUM AND ITS ANTIQUITIES, CONTINUED.

Ascending by a broad flight of steps at the eastern end of the court-yard, you reach the second story of the University building, in which are the National Museum and the halls appropriated to students. On the ground floor, are a rather shabby and neglected chapel and the college-hall or recitation-room, the latter of which reminded me of some of the fine monastic chambers of the Old World, with their high ceilings, lofty windows, dark walls, carved pulpit, and oaken seats, brown with the hues of venerable age.

On the wall at the end of the first flight, as you ascend to the upper story, there is a huge picture, which covers the whole back of the building. It represents a court ceremony of the time of Charles IV.; and from the ugliness of the faces, and the characteristic mien of all the figures, there can be no doubt that it is a faithful representation, both of the persons and costume of the period depicted.

The first room you enter on your right, is a large hall which, like everything public I have yet seen in this Republic, is neglected and lumbered. Around the cornice hangs a row of the portraits of the Viceroys, in the stiff and formal guise of their several periods. Some are in military costume, some in monkish, some in civil, and some in the outlandish frills, furbelows and finery of the last century; but whether it be of wisdom, or of wickedness, nature has invariably stamped a decided character on every head.

In one corner of this apartment stand the remains of a throne, deposited among the rubbish as no longer valuable in a Republic. Near it, however, and in strange contrast, is placed the incomplete basso-relievo of a trophy of liberty; and above this, against the wall, in a rude coffin of rough pine boards, hangs a mummy, dug up not long ago on the fields of Tlaltelolco north of the city.

Yet this room is not altogether destitute of interest, if you can induce the keeper to open the shutters. The light then falls upon portraits of Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of the hall, which are worthy of the pencil of Velasquez.

Passing to the adjoining *sala*, we enter the Museum of Mexican Anti-

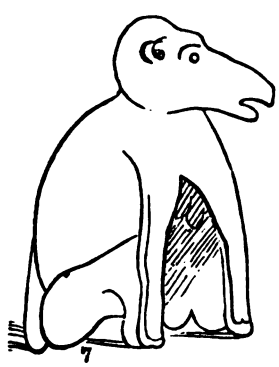
quities, and odd, indeed, is the jumble of fragments of the past and present that bursts upon your view.

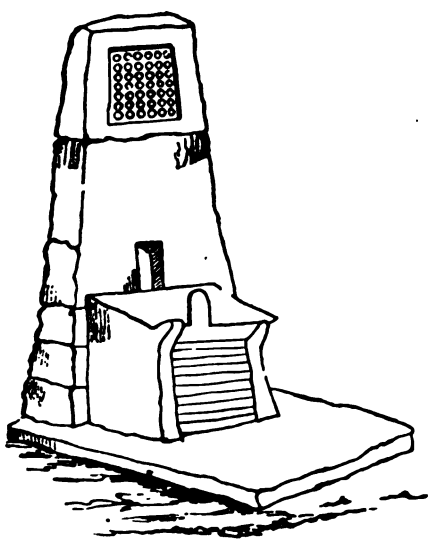
In the centre of the room is a Castle and Fortification, made of *wood and straw*, with mimic guns and all the array of military power. This was the work of a poor prisoner—the labor of years of solitude and misery.

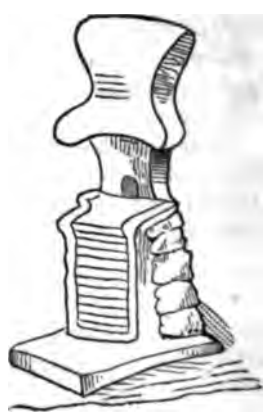
To the left is a numismatic cabinet, tolerably rich in Spanish specimens and in a collection of Roman coins, which promises, under the care of Mr. Gondra, to become exceedingly rare and valuable. Next, there is a small library of manuscripts of the early missionaries in Mexico; volumes of their sermons, poems, and records of marriages, births and baptisms soon after the conquest. It is astonishing to see how many took the name of Hernando Cortez. Next to this, again, is another case containing (among all sorts of antiquated gimcrackery,) some beautiful specimens of the rag and wax-work, which I described in a former letter. In a corner hard by, covered with dust, lie the original drawings of Palenque and the volumes of Lord Kingsborough's Mexico, presented to this Museum by that munificent antiquarian. They are rarely looked at, except by some foreign traveller who happens to straggle into the Museum.

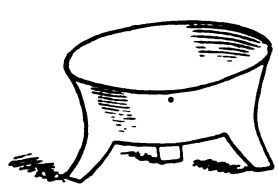
The rest of the collection is valuable. In the adjoining cases are all the smaller Mexican Antiquities, which have been gathered together by the labor of many years, and arranged with some attention to system. In one department you find the hatchets used by the Indians; the ornaments of beads of obsidian and stone worn round their necks; the mirrors of obsidian; the masks of the same material, which they hung at different seasons before the faces of their idols; their bows and arrows and arrow-heads of obsidian, some of them so small and beautifully cut, that the smallest bird might be killed without injuring the plumage.

In another department are the SMALLER IDOLS of the ancient Indians, in clay and stone, specimens of which, together with the small DOMESTIC ALTARS and vases for burning *incense*, are exhibited in the following drawings:



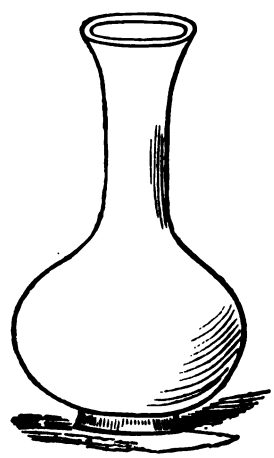


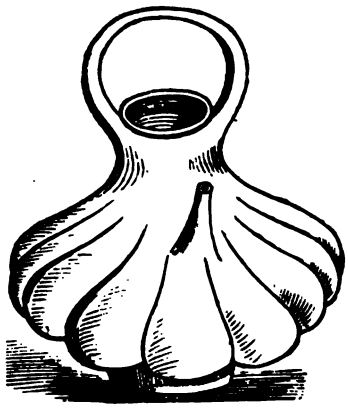


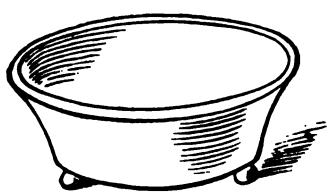


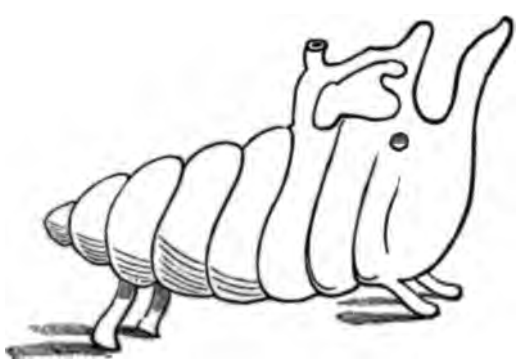
Many of these figures were doubtless worn suspended around the neck, or hung on the walls of houses, as several are pierced with holes, through which cords have evidently been passed.

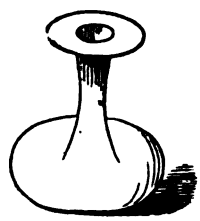
In the next case is a collection of Mexican Vases and Cups, most of which were discovered about the year 1827, in subterranean chambers, in the Island of Sacrificios.

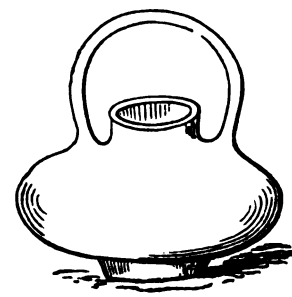








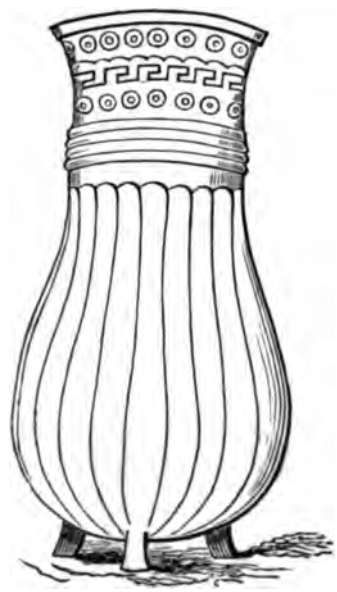




It is well known to all who have read the history of Mexico, that at the period of the conquest by Cortez, this Island was a spot sacred to sepulture and sacrifice.

Owing to the inertness of the Mexican Government, no thorough exploration has as yet been made, but it has been left to the enterprise of commanders of vessels, and especially of vessels of war, who, taking advantage of their detention at anchor under the lee of the island, have rummaged the sands in search of Indian remains, which have been carried to other lands, and are thus for ever lost to Mexico.

In 1841, Monsieur Dumanoir, who commanded the French corvette Ceres, undertook to explore the island. In the centre of it he discovered sepulchres, the bones in which were in admirable preservation; vases of clay, adorned with paintings and engraved; arms, idols, collars, bracelets, teeth of dogs and tigers, and a variety of architectural designs. In one place he found a vase of *white marble;* and in the Museum at Mexico there is now preserved another, also found at Sacrificios, of which the following is the classic shape and adornment:



I give the form of another vase found in this island, which, though neither beautiful nor *classical* as the one above represented, is remarkable for the oddness of its outline.

This vessel is also made of a white transparent marble.

In a neighboring cabinet is seen a curious little figure, carved in serpentine. It appears to have been a charm or talisman, and in many respects resembles the bronze figures which were found at Pompeii, and are preserved in the Secret Museum at Naples. This relic was discovered at St. Iago Tlaltelolco, immediately north of the city of Mexico; but the design appears to me too indelicate to be inserted in a work intended for general readers. It struck me as resembling the images used of old in the worship of Isis, and if it does not serve as a link in the supposed connection between the Egyptians and the Mexicans, it certainly exhibits as great a disregard for decency as characterized the great "mother of ancient art and civilization."

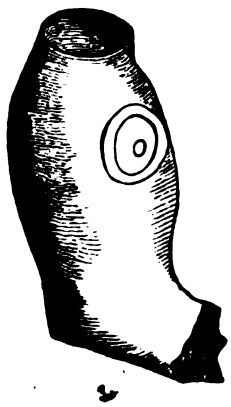
The figures Nos. 1 and 2, on the next page, are drawings of two Indian Axes or Hatchets, of stone, the first of which was discovered in *Baltimore County, State of Maryland,* and the second near *St. Louis Potosi, in Mexico!* I have contrasted them, as singularly alike in shape and

material, both being grooved near the top for the purpose of fitting into a handle;—yet at what a distance from each other were they found!*

1

2

The next cut represents a couple of Indian Pipes, the larger one of which is finely glazed with red.



* Axes of this shape and material have been found in many of our States. For an interesting notice of them, vide Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. 3rd, p. 89. "The hatchet," says this writer, "is a hard stone, eight or ten inches in length and three or four in breadth, of an oval form, flatted and rubbed to an edge at one end; near the other is a *groove*, in which the handle was fastened, and their process to do it was this: When the stone was prepared, they chose a very young sapling, and splitting it near the ground, they forced the hatchet into it as far as the groove, and left nature to complete the work by the growth of the wood, so as to fill the groove and adhere firmly to the stone. They then cut off the sapling above and below, and the hatchet is fit for use."

At the western end of this room are several models of Mines, chiefly made of the different stones found in the mineral regions of Mexico. The figures are of silver; and the various parts of the mine, the mode of obtaining the ore, of freeing them from water, of sinking shafts, the dresses, appearance and labors of the workmen, are most faithfully portrayed.

In one of the corners, behind a quantity of rubbish, old desks and benches, is the *Armor of Cortéz*—a plain unornamented suit of steel, from the size of which, I judge that the Conqueror was not a man of large frame or great bodily strength. Among the portraits of the Viceroys contained in this apartment, there is one of Cortéz; and in it he is depicted in a different manner from that in which we have been accùstomed to know him since our boyhood, when we first made his acquaintance in school histories, drawn as a savage-looking hero with slouched hat and feather and fur-caped coat. There is no doubt, I am told, of the genuineness of the picture in this Museum; and its history is traced with certainty to the period of the third Viceroy, when the gallery of portraits was commenced. It represents him in armor, highly polished, and inlaid with gold. One hand rests upon his plumed helmet and the other on a truncheon. The figure is slender and graceful. I should say, from the expression of the head alone, that the portrait was accurate. His eyes are raised to heaven—his gray hair curls around a rather narrow and not very lofty brow, and the lower part of his face is covered with a grizzly beard and mustache, through which appears a mouth marked with firmness and dignity. There is a look of the world, and of heaven; of veneration and authority. It is, in fact, a characteristic picture of the bigoted soldier, who slew thousands in the acquisition of gold, empire, and a new altar for the Holy Cross. Never was the biography of a hero and enthusiast, more fully written in history, than has been done by the unknown painter of this portrait on the canvas which embellished the walls of the Colonial Palace of Mexico.

In the same room with this picture, hangs the banner under which he conquered. It is in a large gold frame, covered with glass; and, as well as I could distinguish in the bad light in which it is placed, represents the Virgin Mary, painted on crimson silk, surrounded with stars and an inscription.

Just below this is an old Indian painting, made shortly after the conquest, of which the following engraving is a fac-simile. I copied it very carefully, as an authentic record of some of the cruelties practiced by the Spaniards in subduing the chiefs of the country, and striking terror to the minds of the artless Indians.

The two figures in the left-hand corner are Cortez and Doña Marina, as the mottoes above indicate. Marina holds a rosary in her hand, while the Marquis appears to be in the act of speaking and perhaps giving order for the execution represented beneath, where a Spaniard is seen in the act of loosening a blood-hound, who springs at the throat of an Indian. In the original copy all the colors are given. The hair of the victim is erect with horror, his eyes and mouth are distended, and his throat is spotted with blood, as the fangs and claws of the ferocious beast are driven through his flesh.

Aptly placed just below this curious picture is another of the last of the Kings of Tezcoco, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter; and beneath that again, on a stand, in the midst of a number of hideous idols carved in stone, are two Funeral Vases of baked clay, found some years since at St. Jago Tlaltelolco, the northern suburb of the city.

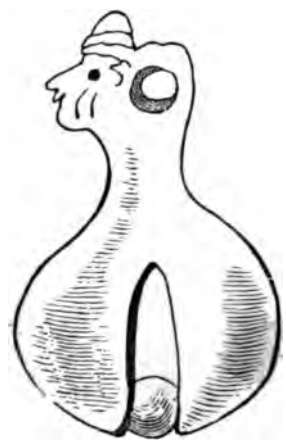
FUNERAL VASE AND COVER.

This is really one of the most beautiful relics in the Museum, and is very accurately represented on the opposite page. It was discovered about nine feet below the surface of the ground; the upper portion of it was filled with skulls, while the lower contained fragments of the rest of the human frame. There appears to have been no bottom to the vase, but it was covered with the circular top delineated in the engraving. The whole vessel is one foot ten inches high, by one foot three and a half inches in diameter.

This vase, besides being remarkable for the ornaments in relief upon it, presents all the colors with which it was originally painted, in high preservation and brilliancy. Immediately below the rim is a *winged head*, with an Indian dress of plumes. The eyes are wide and fixed, and the mouth is partly opened, displaying the teeth. The handles are oddly shaped, and depending from the tips of the wings is a collar formed of alternate ears of corn and sunflowers. The colors of the body of this vase are a bright azure; the upper rim is a brilliant crimson, and the next a light-pink. The head and the ends of the wings, with the stripe in the middle, are painted a light-brown. The circular ornament in the centre is crimson, and the figures on it yellow. The sunflowers are also yellow, while the two outer ears of corn are red, and the centre one blue. The band below these is brown, similar to the head and wings.

The head on this vase is very remarkable in its expression. There is a fixed, intense, stony stare in the eyes. and a pinched sharpness about the mouth, which denote its character. It was evidently the idea of an Angel of death, while the full blown sunflower, and the ripe and stripped ears of corn, denote the fullness of years.

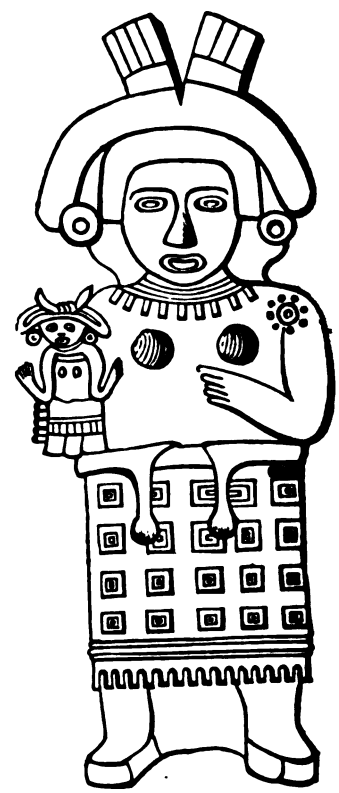
In one of the cases are a series of interesting objects, of which the following designs will give the reader some idea.

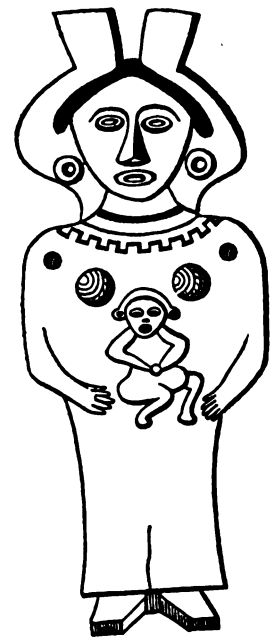


This is a rattle, made of baked clay, finely tempered, containing a small ball, the size of a pea.

The next figures are specimens of "household gods;" some of the originals of which are now in my possession.

Like the ancient Romans, the Mexicans had their Penates, called by them Tepitoton. The sovereigns, and great lords always had six of them in their dwellings; the nobles four, and the common people two; and it is related by Clavigero, that these gods were to be found everywhere in their streets.





In this manner, the immense number of clay figures and fragments which are constantly dug up in every excavation made in the city of Mexico and its neighborhood, is satisfactorily accounted for.

Besides the rattle, given before, there are remains, or traditions, of but few other musical instruments known to the Mexicans. The Teponaztli or Indian drum, is made of hollowed wood, the exterior being covered with tasteful carving, of which the following designs will convey a faithful idea.

The sound was produced by striking the pieces of wood which extended, without meeting, over the upper part of the cavity toward the centre of the instrument.

These are whistles, made of baked clay, and covered with grotesque figures in relief.

The last figures represent flageolets, made, like the whistles, of baked clay. They have four stops, and the sound is, of course, very monotonous. I have seen them used, even at the present day, in some religious ceremonials of the Indians, as an accompaniment to a drum which, though not shaped like the *teponaxth*, produced quite as little music.

* * * * * *

Around the walls of this chamber of the Museum are hung old Indian paintings of portions of Mexican history; genealogies of the Mexican monarchs; computations of time; plans of the city before the conquest, and pictures of various battles and skirmishes that occurred between the natives and the invaders. I regret to say that many of these are only copies, the originals having been taken to England shortly after the establishment of Independence, whence they have never been returned. They are placed better there, perhaps, than they would be in Mexico; where the existing remains of antiquity excite no curiosity, and lie, from year to year, covered with dust, and unexplored on the walls and in the closets of a university. With the exception of Don Carlos Bustamante, I know no one who has devoted an hour, of late years, to these interesting studies; and the curator of the Museum, Don Isidrio Gondra, is so continually occupied with his political duties, in the editing of the Government Gazette, and lacks so greatly the encouragement of the Government, and its dedication of even a thousand dollars a year to archaiological researches, that he does no more than open the doors of these saloons on stated days and smoke his cigar quietly in a corner; while the ladies, gentlemen, loafers and léperos, wander from case to case, and lift up their hands in astonishment at the grotesque forms.

What those forms and figures mean; what was represented by such an idol, or what by another—receives the unfailing Mexican answer: "*Quien sabe?*"—"who knows? who can tell?"

But I must not leave this building, without some remarks on a vase, of which the sketch on the next page is an accurate drawing, representing both its sides.

This vessel, which is of a beautiful yellowish clay, tempered almost as finely as porcelain, and perfectly smooth and hard, is 9¾ inches high, 7 in diameter, and $\frac{2}{16}$ of an inch thick. It was found in the Cerro del Tesoro, or "hill of the treasure," in the prefecture of Tula and Department of Mexico.

I have desired to place it before you for the purpose of comparing the figures engraved on it with the style of the figures drawn by Mr. Catherwood, in Mr. Stephens's travels in Yucatan and elsewhere. Although there are no figures to which I can at once and entirely assimilate these, yet there is a general resemblance which cannot fail to strike the most careless observer.

It will be recollected that Tula was the head-quarters, at one period, of the tribes which afterward penetrated into the Valley of Mexico, and some of which even continued still farther to the southward. May they not have been the parent stock from which sprang the builders of the numerous cities which now lie in ruins in Yucatan? And may not this vase serve to show a connection between all the people who, at the time of the conquest, dwelt on the narrow land which connects the Northern and the Southern portions of our Continent?

I recollect very well, with how much gusto Mr. Gondra brought it forth for my inspection, after he had seen the designs of Mr. Catherwood, and how perfectly his mind seems to be satisfied of the identity and character, origin and habits, of the people who formed this vessel and reared the Temples of Palenque.

* * * * * *

Beyond the room in which we have been so long detained, there is still another apartment, devoted to Natural History. But the Present fares no better than the Past. The birds and beasts are badly stuffed, badly mounted, badly arranged; and when I hoped to find a collection of minerals, or, at least some rare specimens of the splendid ores of Mexico, systematically arranged, I regret to say that I met with equal disappointment.

The last time I visited the Museum, I found on the centre table of the saloon of antiquities, the armor of *Alvarado*. It was pleasant to know that it had at length reached so appropriate a destination, after having been hawked about the Capital by various brokers, who were at one period on the eve of selling it to me, together with the hero's commission, signed by the Emperor, for the sum of one hundred dollars! The Government gave *one hundred and forty dollars* for them, or I have no doubt that these relics of one of the bravest of the conquerors, and the next in repute to Cortéz, would now adorn the walls of our National Institute.

TEOYAOMIQUE.—PROFILE.

TEOYAOMIQUI.—FRONT.

LETTER XVII.

TEOYAOMIQUI. MEXICAN MYTHOLOGY.

The chief antiquities of the Mexicans which have descended to our times, are of a religious character; and their gods, their temples, their pyramids, and their funeral vases, alone remain, after every other important record of a material character has wasted before Time and the bigoted rapacity of the Spaniards. An inquiry in relation to their religion is therefore interesting, as a memorial of the past. Debase a nation as much as you may; crush out its spirit beneath the iron heel of despotism; tear from it and destroy every record of its greatness and its ancestry; yet the miserable remnant which survives the ruin, will still retain, amid changed laws, changed customs, and even a changed faith, the shadow of some of the rites, and the recollection of the gods who were adored by its ancestors. The spirit seems to cling with traditionary fervor to the belief of our fathers. Thus, in Mexico, even after three centuries of the dominion of a foreign Priesthood, the Indian worship, (as I shall have occasion hereafter to show,) still tinges the rites of the Catholic; and I have been credibly informed, that, even now, the keepers of the University sometimes find garlands and flowers which have been hung around that hideous statue, whose figure has just been exhibited in the preceding engraving.

Clavigero, who, with Veytia, is unquestionably the best writer on Mexican history, informs us, that the ancients believed there were three places assigned to their departed spirits.

The *soldiers* who died in battle fighting for their country, or, who perished in captivity, and the *souls of women* who died in childbirth, went to the House of the Sun, where they led a life of endless delight. "At morning they hailed the luminary with music and dancing, attended him in his journey to the meridian, where they met the souls of women, and with similar festivities accompanied him to his setting."

After years of these pleasures their spirits were transformed into clouds, or birds of beautiful plumage and pleasant song; but they had power to ascend again, whenever they desired, to heaven. The ridicu

lous notion of an aristocracy was carried by them even to the other world; and while the nobles animated gorgeous birds and dazzling clouds, and floated in the purest air, the souls of the common people were doomed to crawl in weasels, beetles, and the meaner animals.

The spirits of those who were drowned, or struck by lightning; of those who died with dropsy, tumors, wounds, or similar diseases; went, with the souls of children who had either been drowned or sacrificed in honor of Tlaloc, "the god of the Water," to a delicious place named Tlalocan, where that god resided, surrounded by everything that could contribute to pleasure and happiness.

The third place of departed spirits was Mictlan or Hell. This was a kingdom of *utter darkness*, ruled by a god and goddess, and *the gloomy blackness of the realm was the only punishment*. Clavigero thinks that the Mexicans placed this hell in the centre of the earth—and it may have been but a type of *utter annihilation*.

They had some imperfect ideas of a Supreme God, whom they feared and adored, yet represented by no external form, because they believed him to be *invisible*. He was generally spoken of as TEOTL—GOD—but was known, also, by the name of IPALNEMOANI, "He by whom we live;" and TLOQUE NAHUAQUE, "He who has *all* in himself." They had also an Evil spirit, inimical to mankind, called Tlaleatecolotl, "the Rational Owl." This spirit was said to appear frequently to men, to terrify or injure them; but there is no distinct history of this wicked power, or of their religious system as applied to it. After Teotl—the Supreme invisible Being—there were thirteen others worshipped in Mexico as principal gods.

TETZCATLIPOCA, the "Shining Mirror;" "the God of providence; the Soul of the world; the Creator of heaven and earth; the Master of all things."

OMETEUCTLI and OMECIHUATL, a god and goddess, who granted mortals their wishes. These divinities appear to have presided over new-born children, and reigned in the "celestial paradise."

CIHUACOHUATL, or "Woman Serpent;" also called Quilaztli or Touacacihua: "woman of our flesh;" was held to be the mother of the human race, and was venerated next to Ometeuctli and Omecihuatl.

TONATRICLI and MEZTLI, the sun and moon deified; of whom I shall have occasion to say something in describing the pyramids of St. Juan Teotihuacan.

QUETZALCOATL, concerning whom I have already written in my letter on Cholula.

TLALOC, "the god of Water;" the fertilizer of the soil, the protector of temporal goods. His image was painted *blue* and *green*, to represent the hues of water, and in his hand he held an undulating and pointed rod to signify his control over storms and lightning.

XIUHTEUCTLI, "master of the year and grass;" the god of Fire. An oblation of the first morsel and the first draught at dinner, was always

given him by the Mexicans; and at the close of the festival in his honor the fires in the temples and dwellings were extinguished, and rekindled from the one lighted before the idol.

CENTEOTL, the "goddess of the Earth and Corn;" and known, also, by another word which signifies "she who supports us." This was a goddess devotedly worshipped by the Totonacos, who believed that in the course of time she would free them from the slavery of the other gods, and abolish the horrors of human sacrifice. To her only were offered *doves*, *quails*, *leverets*, and such harmless animals. She was a Mexican Ceres.

MICTLANTEUCTLI, "the god of Hell," and his female companion. Sacrifices were made to him *at night*, and his priests were clad in black during their ministrations at the altars.

JOALTEUCTLI, "the god of Night;" was the divinity who gave sleep to children, while JOALTICITL was the goddess of cradles, and presided over their infants in the watches of the night.

The next deity was the one most honored by the Mexicans, and regarded as their chief protector—HUITZILIPOTCHTLI, or MEXITLI, "the god of War," the Mexican Mars.

This was the mighty power who became, (according to their tradition,) the protector of the Mexicans; conducted them through the years of their pilgrimage, and at length, settled them on the spot where they afterward founded the great city of Mexico.

"To him they raised that superb Temple so much celebrated by the Spaniards. His statue was of gigantic size, in the posture of a man seated on a blue-colored bench, from the corners of which issued four gigantic snakes. His forehead was blue, and his face and the back of his head were covered with *golden* masks. He wore a crest shaped like the beak of a bird. On his neck was a collar of ten *figures of the human heart*. In his right hand he bore a blue club, huge and twisted—in his left a shield, on which appeared five balls of feathers disposed in the form *of a cross*, while from the upper part of it rose a golden flag with four arrows, which the Mexicans pretend to have been sent from heaven to perform the glorious actions of his history. His body was girt with a large *golden snake*, and adorned with various lesser figures of animals, made of gold and silver and precious stones, each of which ornaments had a peculiar meaning."*

Whenever war was contemplated by the Mexicans, this god was implored for protection, and they offered up to him a greater number of human victims than to any of the other deities. The only figure I found in Mexico upon which the antiquarians seemed agreed as to its representation of this god, (though not with all the splendor described by Clavigero,) was the following: it is in bas-relief, and is in the collection of Don Mariano Sanchez y Mora, ex-Condé del Peñasco.

* Vide Clavigero and McCulloh.

I cannot conclude the account of this god without referring to a tradition which is given in relation to him, by Acosta, in his Natural and Moral History, book 4th, chap. xxiv., and is repeated by Clavigero and Dr. McCulloh.

Two days before his festival, an idol representing him was made by the sacred Virgins, of grains of parched corn and seeds of beets, mixed together with honey or the *blood of children*. This they clothed with a splendid dress and seated on a litter.

On the morning of the festal day this figure was borne in solemn procession around the city of Mexico, and then carried to the temple, where they had prepared a great quantity of the same paste of seeds and blood, of which the priests also made an idol, called "*the flesh and bones*" of Huitzilopotchtli.

After certain ceremonials and consecration, the image was sacrificed as they sacrificed their human victims, "and his body was *broken into small pieces*, which, *together with those portions called his 'flesh and bones,' were distributed among the people*," who, according to Acosta, "received the same with tears, fear and reverence, as if it was an admirable thing, saying that *they did eat the flesh and bones of God*, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks," continues Acosta, "demanded thereof for them, and carried it with *great reverence and devotion*."

This extraordinary ceremonial was no coinage of the Spanish priests, for Acosta calls it "*a communion, which the devil himself, the prince of pride, ordained in Mexico, to counterfeit the Holy Sacrament!*"*

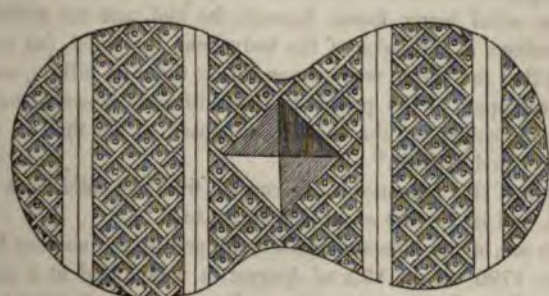
Thus magnificent as was the god of War, he did not disdain, according to tradition, to take unto himself a very hideous partner, whose monstrous and horrible figure has been preserved to these times in the statue, drawings of which are given at the commencement of this letter.

TEOYAOMIQUI, the wife of Huitzilopotchtli, was the goddess who conducted the souls of the warriors, who died in defence of their altars, to the Mexican Elysium—the House of the Sun.

The figure on the opposite page represents the front of this idol—the breasts denoting the sex. At the sides of these, and beneath, are four hands, displaying the open palms, while above and between the hands are sacks, or purses in the shape of gourds, which, according to Don Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc, represented "*the woven purses*," of a blue color, filled with copal, that were offered to the idol containing the sacred incense used at the election and funeral ceremonies of Kings, and burned with the bodies or hearts of the captives slain to accompany the deceased sovereign on his journey to the world of spirits.

In front of the waist, a death-head is attached. The strap by which these skulls are held, will be perceived in the second figure, which exhibits the statue *in profile*.

The knots of serpents, the feathers, the shells, and the nails or claws forming the lower part of the figure, are said by De Gama† to be the insignia of other gods connected with Teoyaomiqui or her husband; while all those above the waist, both in front and behind, are symbols of that deity herself. The top of the statue is represented in the following drawing:



*The figure of the Holy Cross has been found in Mexico, and a drawing of one discovered at Palenque, is given by Mr. Stephens in his first volume. It is known that an idolatrous worship was paid it before the conquest. In Egypt it was venerated from the greatest antiquity as the symbol of *matter*. Among the Irish it was the symbol of knowledge, and Garcilaso de la Vega informs us, that the ancient Peruvians had "a cross of white marble which they held in great veneration, but did not adore." They could give no reason for the respect they paid it.

†P. 36 Discripcion Historica y Cronologica.

And the next is a picture of its lower part or bottom:

It is the opinion of all the Mexican antiquarians, from the fact of this sculpture in relief being found beneath the idol, and the additional fact of the projections at the sides of the body near the waist, (as seen in the first plate,) that the statue was suspended by them on pillars, so as to allow the worshippers or the priests to pass with ease beneath the monster. The idol represented on the base is supposed to be that of MICTLANTEUHTLI, the "god of Hell."

The height of this immense mass, *carved from one solid block of basalt, is nine feet*, and its *breadth about five and a half*.

Such was one of the hideous gods worshipped by the ancient Mexicans. In the year 1790, on the 13th of August, it was found at a short depth below the surface of the great square. It was removed, some time afterward, to the court-yard of the University, where it was buried again to conceal it from the Indians, who might have been tempted by the devil, (as was said by the priests,) to return to its idolatrous worship. It is only since the year 1821, that it has been exposed to public view in the inclosure where I found it, and which I have described to you.

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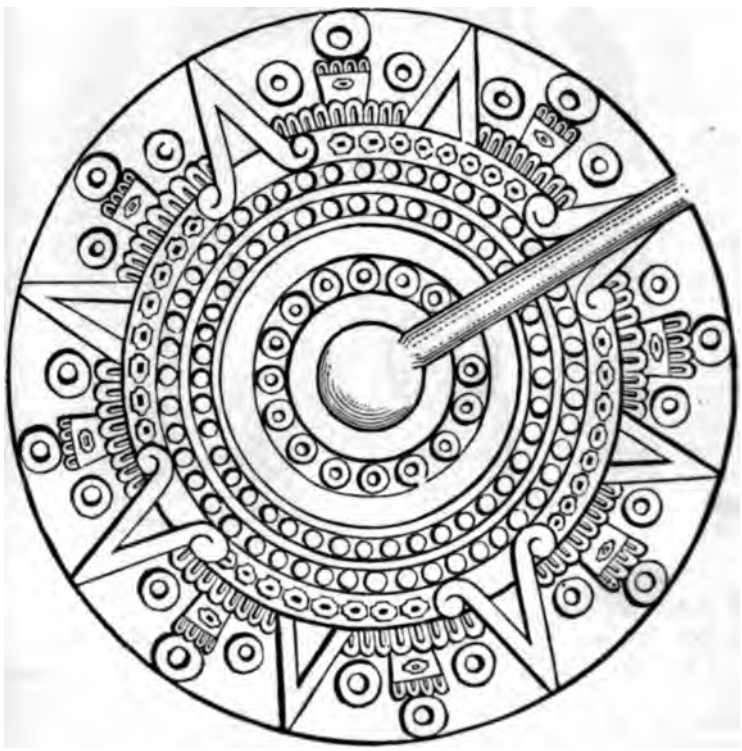


TOP OF SACRIFICIAL STONE.

LETTER XVIII.

PRIESTS. TEMPLES. SACRIFICES.

THE Priests have always borne an important part in Mexican affairs, and it is stated, upon good authority, that at the height of the power of the Empire, they numbered not less than one million in the service of the different idols.

They were divided into different orders, and there were both monks and priests, as among the Catholics. Women, also, entered into the sacred order, and performed all the duties usually assigned to the males, except that of sacrifice. The monks were called Hamacazques, and the priests Teopixqui.

They had two chiefs, who obtained their rank and power by lives of exemplary probity and virtue, and by a profound acquaintance with all the rites and mysteries of their religion. These were the "diviners" or soothsayers, who were consulted by the authorities on all high matters of state, both in peace and war. They officiated at the most solemn of their sacrifices, and crowned the sovereign upon his accession to the throne. On the principal festivals their dress was splendid, and bore the insignia of the god in whose honor they officiated. To the minor priesthood, all the humble duties of the temples were assigned; they cleaned the sacred edifice, educated the young, took care of the holy pictures, and observed the Calendar.

Nor did they lack a resemblance to portions of the Catholic clergy, in the austerity and mortification of their lives. Not only did they wear sackcloth next their skin and apply the scourge in secret, but they shed their own blood; pierced themselves with the sharp points of the aloe; and bored their ears, lips, tongues, arms and legs, by introducing fragments of cane, which they gradually increased in size, as their wounds began to heal. Their fasts, too, were long and severe.

Each sex lived apart, leading a life of celibacy, in monastic establishments, and their income was derived from lands set aside for their maintenance,—separate revenues being devoted to the support of the Temple.

It is in their sacred edifices that these people were the most remarkable, and, as in Egypt, they are probably the only remains that will be discovered in our day and generation.

I shall have occasion, hereafter, to give some descriptions of other Teocallis, "*Houses of God*"—and Teopans, "*Places of God;*" but I cannot refrain, in this connection, from giving you some idea of the condition of the great Temple of Mexico at the period of the conquest, as the account of it comes from eye-witnesses, between whom there can by no possibility have been a collusion to impose either upon the sovereign for whom the one wrote, or, upon the mass of the Spanish nation to which the writings of the others were addressed.

It is related that in the year 1486, Ahuitzotl, the eighth King of Mexico and predecessor of Montezuma, completed the great Teocalli in his capital.

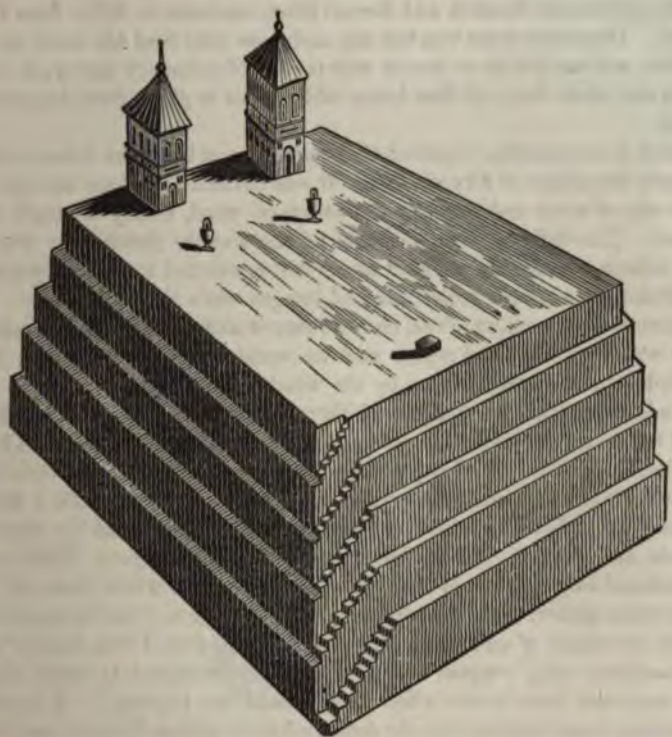
* This magnificent edifice occupied the centre of the city, and, together with the other temples and buildings annexed to it, comprehended all that space upon which the great Cathedral church now stands, part of the greater market place, and part of the neighboring streets and buildings.

It was surrounded by a wall eight feet thick, built of *stone and lime*, crowned with battlements in the form of niches, and ornamented with many stone figures in the shape of serpents. Within this inclosure, it is affirmed by Cortéz, that a town of five hundred houses might have been built!

It had four gates fronting the cardinal points, and over each portal was a military arsenal filled with needful equipments.

The space within the walls was beautifully paved with polished stones, so smooth that the horses of the Spaniards "could not move over them without slipping," and in the centre of this splendid area arose the great Teocalli. This was an immense truncated pyramid of earth and stones, composed of four stories or bodies; an idea of which may perhaps be obtained by an inspection of the following drawing, taken from one made by the Anonymous Conqueror, which may be found in the collection of Ramusis, and in the *Œdipus Ægyptiacus* of Father Kircher.

* I give the description of Clavigero and Dr. McCulloh, founded on the authority of Cortéz's Letters to Charles V., Bernal Diaz, Sahagun, and the Anonymous Conqueror.



The top of this pyramid (as appears from the design) was not reached by a flight of steps from the base on the front of the edifice, but by a stairway passing from body to body; so that a person, in ascending, was obliged to move four times around the whole of the Teocalli before he reached its summit. The width of these spaces or stories, at the base of each body, was five or six feet, and it is alleged that three or four persons abreast could easily pass round them.

There is some difference of opinion among the old writers, as to the dimensions of the mound; but Clavigero, after a laborious investigation, comes to the conclusion, "that the first body or base of the building, was more than fifty perches long from east to west, and about forty-three in breadth from north to south; the second body was *about* a perch less in length and breadth; the third so much less than the second, and the rest in proportion." Dr. McCulloh, relying on Gomara and Humboldt, states that the mound was faced with stone, and was 320 feet square at the base, and 120 feet high.

In the drawing just given, it will be observed that there are *two* towers erected on the upper surface, and Clavigero so describes the edifice; but the learned author of Researches on American Aboriginal History, found-

ing his opinion on Gomara and Bernal Diaz, ventures to differ from Clavigero. Diaz says there was but *one*, and those who read his work, in the original, will not fail to be struck with the air of accuracy and truth with which the whole story of that brave old soldier is given from beginning to end.

There is no question, however, that there was at least one tower, raised to nearly the height of fifty-six feet. It was divided into three stories, the lower one of stone and mortar; the others of wood, neatly wrought and painted. The inferior portion of this edifice was *the Sanctuary;* where, Diaz relates, two highly adorned altars were erected to Huitzilopotchtli and Tezcatlipoca, over which the idol images were placed in state.

Before these towers, or tower, on two vases or altars, "as high as a man," a fire was kept day and night, and its accidental extinguishment was dreaded, as sure to be followed by the wrath of Heaven.

In addition to this great Teocalli, there were forty other temples dedicated to the gods, within the area of the serpent-covered wall. There was the *Tezcacalli*, or "House of Mirrors," the walls of which were covered with brightly shining materials. There was the *Teccizcalli*, a house adorned with shells, to which the sovereign retired at times for fasting, solitude and prayer. There were temples to *Tezcatlipoca*, *Tlaloc*, and *Qaetzalcoatl*—the shrine of the latter being *circular*, while those of the others were *square*. "The entrance" says Clavigero, "to this sanctuary was by the *mouth of an enormous serpent of stone*, armed with fangs; and the Spaniards who, tempted by their curiosity, ventured to enter, afterward confessed their horror when they beheld the interior." It is said, that among these temples was one dedicated to the planet Venus; and that they sacrificed a number of prisoners, at the time of her appearance, before a huge pillar, upon which was engraved the figure of a *star*.

The Colleges of the priests, and their seminaries, were likewise various and perhaps numerous; "but only five are particularly known, although there must have been more, from the prodigious number of persons who were found in that place consecrated to the worship of the gods."

Besides these edifices of religious retirement and learning, *there was a house of entertainment to accommodate strangers of eminence, who piously came to visit the Temple, or to see the "grandeurs of the Court."* There were ponds, in which the priests bathed at midnight, and many beautiful fountains, one of which was deemed holy, and only used on the most solemn festivals.

Then there were gardens where flowers and sweet-smelling herbs were raised for the decoration of the altars, and among which they fed the birds used in sacrifices to certain idols. It is said, that there was even a little wood or grove filled with "hills, rocks, and precipices," from which, upon one of their solemn festivals, the priests issued in a mimic chase.

Without entering on a more extended description of the Mexican temples, and the lives, character, and occupations of the priesthood, I will

GROUP FROM THE SIDE OF SACRIFICIAL STONE.

conclude this branch of an interesting antiquarian subject, by referring all who are curious in such matters, to the very interesting volumes of the Abbé Clavigero, who, after a residence of near forty years in the provinces of New Spain, composed his history of Mexico. His life had been passed in deep study of the Indian and Spanish writers, and the results of his well-digested labors have, after near half a century, passed to our times as indisputable authority.

But after instructing you in some degree in the history of the priesthood and the temples, it would be improper for me to leave the subject without an account of the services to which they were both devoted.

The chief of these were the *sacrifices*—and in illustration of them, I have placed at the commencement of this letter, a drawing of the large circular stone now in the University of Mexico, known by the name of the "Piedra de Sacrificios," or Sacrificial Stone. It is an immense mass of basalt, *nine feet in diameter and three in height*, and was found in 1790, below the great square of Mexico, on the site of the Teocalli, which I have just described.

When first discovered, this stone was overturned, but, upon reversing it, carvings in bas-relief were seen on the surface, and the sides were found to be beautifully sculptured, as will be observed in the opposite plate.

In the centre of the upper surface there is a circular cavity, from which a canal, or gutter, leads to the circumference of the cylinder and partly down its side. This, together with the sculpture, has induced most writers to believe it to have been the stone on which the priests performed their sacrifices, and that the blood of the victims flowed from it by these evident conduits. Yet other authors doubt whether it was ever appropriated to this use. It is true, that in the description of the great Temple given by the old writers, it is alleged that in front of the tower, on the summit, there was a large *convex* stone upon which they extended the person who was to be sacrificed; but it is highly probable that so huge a mass of rock as this,* could not have been borne up such intricate passages as the steps of the Teocalli, to the height of 120 feet. De Gama is of opinion that these stones were also found in the square below, in the temples, or before the altars of other deities; and, in the description of those in the temples of Huitzilopolchtli and Tlaloc, Doctor Hernandez says they were "*convexas et orbiculari forma*," and called "Techcatl." "Ante has" (mensulas) "aderant lapidæ orbiculari forma, quibus *techcatl* nomen, ubi servi, at in prœliis capti, in horum Deorum honorem mactabantur, *è quibus lapidibus in parimentum usque in infernum civi sanguinei conspiciebantur vestigia*, quod etiam videbatur in *cæteris turribus*."

With these authorities, and apparent appropriateness from the cavities already described, it is, nevertheless, the opinion of De Gama that this was neither a Stone of Sacrifice, nor the Gladiatorial Stone. Such, how-

* Nine feet in diameter by three feet high.

ever, is its name, and such the opinion of most persons in Mexico; and, although I should not perhaps, in justice, venture to express an opinion, yet I cannot help believing with the majority.

When we look at the sculpture at the sides, we are struck with the fitness of the adornment for sacrificial ceremonies. The Mexicans undoubtedly sacrificed the captives they had taken in battle, and the bas-relief evidently represents a conqueror and a captive. The victor's hand is raised in the act of tearing the plumes from his prisoner's crest, while the captive bows beneath the indignity, and prostrates his arms:—and here let me invite the reader's attention to the great similarity of these figures and their dresses, to those delineated by Catherwood and Stephens, as having been found in Yucatan and at Palenque.*

* * * * * * *

I will now give you some account of the Mexican Sacrifices. These were of two kinds: the common sacrifice of human victims, and the "GLADIATORIAL SACRIFICE."

It is supposed, that neither the Toltecs nor Chechemicas permitted human sacrifices, and that it was reserved for the successors of these occupants of the Vale of Anahuac to institute the abominable practice. The history of the Aztec tribe reveals to us the fact, that it *fought itself gradually to power*. The Mexicans founded their Empire first among the lagunes and marshes of the lake; and it grew, by slow degrees, to the power and wealth it possessed at the period of the conquest.

When I encounter in Mexican history a monstrous fact like this, of the sacrifice to the gods of the unfortunate prisoners who had fallen into their power in battle, I am not deterred, by its enormity, from inquiring whether some secret policy may not have originated the horrid rite. The mind naturally revolts at the idea that it sprang from a mere brutal love of blood, or that a nation could, at any period of the world, have been so cruel and so inhuman!

In reviewing, then, the history of the Empire of a weak but bold and ambitious people—fighting for a foothold; becoming powerful only as it was able to inspire its enemies with terror; unable to maintain, subdue, or imprison its captives—we may ask ourselves, whether it was not rather a stroke of savage statesmanship in the Chiefs of the time, to make a merit of necessity, and a holy and religious rite of what, under other circumstances and in a later period of the world, has been considered a murder?

And such, I believe, to have been the beginning of the Mexican sacrifices. A weak people unable to control, enslave, or *trust* its prisoners, devoted them to the gods. But, in the progress of time, when that nation had acquired a strength equal to any emergency, this ceremony, too, had become a prescriptive usage—a traditionary and most important part of the religion itself; and thus, what in its inception was the *policy* of fee-

* Vide Stephens's Yucatan, vol. i. pp. 418 and 419, and the plates opposite them.

bleness, ended in an established *principle* of the mythology of a powerful and even civilized Empire.

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Let us now proceed to consider the manner in which these sacrifices were conducted.

The usual number of priests required at the altar was six, one of whom acted as Sacrificer and the others as his assistants. The Chief of these, whose office and dignity were prëeminent, assumed at every sacrifice the *name* of the deity to whom the oblation was made.

His dress was a red habit, like the Roman scapulary, fringed with cotton; his head was bound with a crown of green and yellow feathers; his ears were adorned with emeralds, and from his lips depended a turquoise. The other ministers at the rite were clad in white, embroidered with black; their locks bound up, their heads covered with leather thongs, their foreheads filleted with slips of paper of various colors, and their bodies dyed entirely black.

They dressed the victim in the insignia of the god to whom he was to be offered; adored him as they would have adored the divinity himself; and bore him around the city asking alms for the temple. He was then carried to the top of the temple and extended upon the stone of sacrifice.

Four of the priests held his limbs, and another kept his head or neck firm with a yoke, an original of which is preserved in the Museum, and is here represented.

SACRIFICIAL YOKE.

Thus arranged, the body of the captive lay arched over the rounded stone, with the breast and stomach stretched and raised.

The Topiltzin, or Sacrificer, then approached with a sharp knife of obsidian.

SACRIFICIAL KNIFE OF OBSIDIAN.

He made an incision in the victim's breast; tore out his heart with his hand; offered it to the sun, and then threw it palpitating at the feet of the god.

If the idol was large and hollow, it was usual to insert the heart in its mouth with a golden spoon; and at other times it "was taken up from the ground again, offered to the idol, burned, and the ashes preserved with the greatest veneration."

"After these ceremonies," says Dr. McCulloh, "the body was thrown from the top of the temple, whence it was taken by the person who had offered the sacrifice, and carried to his house, where it was *eaten by himself and friends*. The remainder was burned, or *carried to the royal menageries to feed the wild beasts!*"

At times they offered only flowers, fruits, oblations of bread, cooked meats, (like the Chinese,) copal and gums, quails, falcons, and rabbits; but, at the feasts of some of the deities, especially every fourth year, among the Quauhtitlans, the rites were dreadfully inhuman.

Six trees were then planted in the area of the temple, and two slaves were sacrificed, from whose bodies the skin was stripped, and the thigh-bones withdrawn. On the following day, "*clad in the bloody skins with the thigh-bones in their hands*," two of the chief priests slowly descended the steps of the temple; with dismal howlings, while the multitude assembled below shouted, "Behold our gods!"

At the base of the temple they danced to the sound of music, while the people sacrificed several thousand quails. When this oblation was terminated, the priests fastened to the tops of the trees six prisoners, who were immediately pierced with arrows. They then cut the bodies from the trees and threw them to the earth, where their breasts were torn open, and the hearts wrenched out according to the usual custom. This bloody and cruel festival was ended by a banquet, in which the priests and nobles of the city feasted on the *quails and the human flesh!*

The other mode of sacrifice, as I have before said, was the "Gladiatorial."

GLADIATORIAL STONE.

The stone, of which the foregoing plate is an outline, was, (like the Sacrificial Stone,) found in the great square of Mexico, where it still lies buried, for want of the trifling sum required to disinter it once more, and place it in the Museum.

When the square was undergoing repairs, some years past, this monument was discovered a short distance beneath the surface. Mr. Gondra endeavored to have it removed, but the Government refused to incur the expense; and its dimensions, as he tells me, being exactly those of the Sacrificial Stone, viz. nine feet by three, he declined undertaking it on his own account. Yet, anxious to preserve, if possible, some record of the carving with which it was covered, (especially as that carving was painted with yellow, red, green, crimson, and black, and the colors still

quite vivid,) he had a drawing made, of which the sketch in this work is a fac-simile.

Mr. Gondra believes it to have been the Gladiatorial Stone, placed perhaps opposite the great Sacrificial Stone, at the base of the Teocalli. This, however, would not agree with the accounts of some of the old writers, who, although they agree that this stone was *circular*, as is signified by its name, (Temalacatl) yet state that its surface was smooth, and had in its centre a bore or bolt, to which the captive was attached, as will be hereafter described.

The figures represented on the stone in relief, are evidently those of warriors armed, and ready for the strife; and I have thought it proper to give the picture of it to the public, for the first time, (subject, of course, to all critical observations,) with the hope that if it be not the Gladiatorial Stone, those who are more learned in Mexican antiquity, may some day discover what it really is. It is certainly remarkable for the *colors*, which are yet fresh; and for the figure of the "open hand," which is sculptured on a shield and between the legs of some of the figures of the groups at the sides. This "open hand" was a figure found by Mr. Stephens, in almost every temple he visited, during his recent explorations of Yucatan.*

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The Gladiatorial Sacrifice—the most noble of them all—was reserved alone for captives renowned for courage.

In an area, near the temple, large enough to contain a vast crowd of spectators, upon a raised terrace eight feet from the wall, was a *circular stone*, "resembling a mill-stone," says Clavigero,† "which was three feet high, well polished, and with figures cut on it." On this the prisoner was placed, tied by one foot, and armed with a small sword and shield, while a Mexican soldier or officer, better armed and accoutred, mounted to encounter him in deadly conflict. The efforts of the brave prisoner were of course redoubled to save his life and fame, as were those of the Mexican, whose countrymen gazed with anxiety upon him as the vindicator of their nation's skill and glory. If the captive was vanquished in the combat, he was immediately borne "to the altar of common sacrifice," and his heart torn out, while the multitude applauded the victor, who was rewarded by his sovereign. Some historians declare, that if the prisoner vanquished *one* combatant he was free; but Cortéz tells us that he was not granted his life and liberty until he had overcome *six*. It was then, only, that the spoils taken from him in war were restored, and he was allowed to return to his native land.

It is related that once when the chief lord of the Cholulans had become captive to the Huexotzincas, he overthrew, in the gladiatorial fight, seven

† Clavigero, vol. ii., 280.

* I have not caused the figures on the sides of this stone to be engraved in the present edition.

of the foes who came to encounter him; and being thus entitled to his fortune and liberty, he was nevertheless slain by his enemies, who feared so valiant and fortunate a chieftain. By this perfidious act, the nation rendered itself eternally infamous among all the rest.

The number of the victims, with whose blood the Teocallis of Mexico were in this manner, and in the "common sacrifice" annually deluged, is not precisely known. Clavigero thinks 20,000 nearer the truth than any of the other relations; but the question may well be asked, Whence came the subjects to glut the gods with these periodical sacrifices? It seems that no land could furnish them without depopulation.

In the consecration of the Great Temple, however, which, it is related, took place in the year 1486, under the predecessor of Montezuma, there appears no doubt among those who have most carefully examined the matter, that its walls and stairways, its altars and shrines, were baptized and consecrated with the blood of more than *sixty thousand victims*. "To make these horrible offerings" says the historian, "with more show and parade, they ranged the prisoners in two files, *each a mile and a half in length*, which began in the woods of Tacuba and Iztpalapan, and terminated at the Temple, where, as soon as the victims arrived, they were sacrificed."

Six millions of people, it is said, attended, and if this is not an exaggeration of tradition, there can be no wonder whence the captives sprung, or why the rite of sacrifice was instituted. If anything can pardon the cupidity and blood-thirstiness of the Christian Spaniard, for his overthrow of the Temple and Monarchy of Mexico, it is to be found in the cruel murders which were perpetrated, by the immolation of thousands of immortal beings to a blind and bloody idolatry.

LETTER XIX.

THE MEXICAN CALENDAR. FIRE-WORSHIP, ETC.

The carved stone represented in the plate was found in the year 1790, about six feet below the surface of the Plaza, in the city of Mexico. The opinion of the best antiquarians is, that it was the *Tonalponalli*, or "solar reckoning" of the ancient Mexicans, derived by them probably from the Toltecs.

Before describing this relic, I will present a brief account of the division of time among these nations, illustrating in this manner and by the stone itself, one branch of the arts and sciences, at least, in which they had made a great and civilized progress.

The Mexicans had two Calendars by which they computed Time; the first being used for the "reckoning of the moon," and the regulation of their religious festivals, and the other for the "reckoning of the sun," or civil purposes.

Their civil year consisted of 18 months of 20 days each, by which division they gave the year 360 days; but the remaining five days were added to the last month, and bore the name of *nemontemi*, or "useless days."

The tropical year being six hours lónger than 365 days, they lost a day every four years; but this fact appears to have been entirely disregarded by them in their calculations, until the expiration of their cycle of 52 years; when, having lost, in all, 13 days, they added that number to the period, before they commenced another cycle.

The 18 months had each a name derived from some festival, bird, plant, or fruit, occurring or appearing at that season, which name was designated by a peculiar *hieroglyphic*. The 20 days of the month had also each a name and mark, that was ever the same in all the eighteen. They reckoned by cycles of 52 years; and subdivided the months into four periods, or weeks of five days; each day of which commenced, as among the Romans and other nations, at sunrise, and was separated into eight portions.*

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The stone (of which I have presented an extremely accurate drawing from one made with the greatest care by De Gama,) is now walled against the base of one of the towers of the Cathedral, where it passes by the name of *el Relox de Montezuma*, or "Montezuma's watch." It is a vast mass of basalt, *eleven feet eight inches in diameter*, and the circular portion is raised by a rim of about 7½ inches from the broken square of basalt, out of which the whole was originally carved. This rim is adorned with the sculpture represented in the second figure.

De Gama, in his "*Descripcion Historica*," has prepared a long and very learned account of the various figures and symbols with which this Calendar is covered, and from his observations, and those of Nebel, I have

* McCulloh's Res. 201, et seq.

digested the following description. Involved as almost all antiquarian researches are in obscurity, and free as those who engage in them are to mix up their fancies and theories with the slightest facts upon which they can found a hypothesis, I confess that I do not rely entirely upon the surmises of the writers I have cited. Yet they are the only persons who have hitherto attempted to unravel the mystery, and I am therefore obliged either to present their conjectures or none.

The large head in the centre, with a protruding tongue, is said to represent the sun; while the triangular figures marked with the letter R, and the other figures marked with the letter L, denote the larger and lesser rays with which the Indians surrounded that luminary.

Around this central sun are four squares, denoted by A, B, C, D, which, together with the circular figures E F at the sides of the triangle, I, at the top, and the character H at the bottom, combined, (according to De Gama,) to form the symbol of the sun's movement—or perhaps the symbols of the four weeks into which the month was divided.

The hieroglyphs denoted by the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. up to 20, are the days of the month, and the rest of the figures around the zone are somewhat fancifully said to represent the milky way known to the ancients by the name of *Citlalinycue*. By an equal stretch of the imagination, the waving lines, marked V, are supposed to indicate the clouds, which were venerated as gods called *Almaque*, the inseparable companions of TLALOC. De Gama thinks that the small squares at *e* are symbols of the mountains where the clouds are formed. Such are the satisfactory conjectures of antiquarians!

Gnomons were placed in the holes at X, Z, PP, QQ, and YY; the stone was then set up vertically due east and west, with its carved face to the south, and by means of threads stretched from the tops of the gnomons and the shadows they cast on the surface of the stone, the seasons of the year, and the periods of the day, were determined with astronomical accuracy.

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Various other carved stones intended for astronomical purposes, have been discovered at different times throughout the Valley of Mexico and its neighborhood. De Gama relates, that "in the year 1775, while laborers were excavating at the hill of Chalpultepec, they laid bare a cluster of curiously sculptured rocks, which, after a careful examination, he believed had once formed a portion of the system by which the Mexicans determined the exact periods of sunrise and sunset at the equinoxes, and regulated the time during the remainder of the year." But when he returned to the hill for the purpose of further investigation, he found these rocks and all their carving had been *destroyed by the ignorant excavators*,

through the utter carelessness and neglect of the authorities of the place. The same fate was shared by another astronomical erection, which was found on the hill of Tezcosingo, on the eastern side of the lake of Tezcoco. to which I shall have occasion to allude in an account of a visit I paid to the pyramids of St. Juan Teotihuacan.

These are the few hasty and very imperfect sketches I have collected, to illustrate one branch of the art and science of these people; and I will conclude them by an account of a singular superstition which is related by the Baron Humboldt to have existed, in regard to the *termination of their cycle of* 52 *years.* They firmly believed that the sun would return no more on his diurnal course, and that evil spirits would descend to destroy mankind!

"On the last day of the great cycle the sacred fires were extinguished in all their temples and dwellings, and the people devoted themselves to prayer. At the approach of night no one dared to kindle a flame—their vessels of clay were broken, their garments rent, and whatever was precious destroyed as useless in the approaching ruin. In this mad superstition, pregnant women became the objects of peculiar horror to men; they covered their faces with paper masks, they imprisoned them in their granaries; and believed that when the final catastrophe occurred, these unfortunate females, transformed into tigers, would join with the demons and avenge themselves for the injustice and cruelty of men.

"As soon as it became dark on that awful evening, a grand and solemn procession of the "NEW FIRE" was commenced. The priests put on the garments of the various idols, and followed by the sad and bewildered people, ascended a hill about six miles from the city.

"This mournful march was called the "procession of the gods," and was supposed to be their final departure from their temples and altars.

"When the solemn train had reached the top of the hill, it rested until the *pleiades* ascended to the zenith, and then commenced the sacrifice of a human victim, stretched on the stone of sacrifice, and covered on the breast with a wooden shield which the chief priest *inflamed by friction.*

"The victim received the fatal blow or wound from the usual obsidian knife of sacrifice, and as soon as life was extinct, the machine to create fire was put in motion on the board over his bosom. When the blaze had kindled, the body was thrown on an immense pile, the flames of which instantly ascended into the air, and denoted the promise of the sun's return! All who had been unable to join in the sacred procession of the departing gods, had climbed to the terraces of houses and the tops of Teocallis, whence they strained their eyes toward the spot where the hoped-for flame was to appear, and as soon as it burst upon their sight, hailed it with joyful shouts and acclamations, as a token of the benevolence of the gods and the preservation of their race for another cycle.

"Runners, placed at regular distances from each other, held aloft torches of resinous pine, by which they transferred the new fire to each other, and carried it from village to village, throughout the Empire, de-

positing it anew in every temple, whence it was again distributed to the dwellings of the people.

"When the sun arose above the horizon on the succeeding day, the shouting and joy were renewed by the people in the city, toward which at that moment the priests and crowd took up the line of returning march. It was the restoration of their gods to their deserted shrines!

"The imprisoned women were immediately released; the whole population clad themselves in new garments; the temples were purified and whitened, and everything that was requisite for domestic comfort, splendor or necessity, was renewed under the promise of renewed life and protection from the gods."

There is scarcely a country of the world, in which there are not or have not been traces of this adoration of the sun, the great source of life, light, fruition, and beauty; and, among the brutal rites of the Mexican priesthood, it is gratifying to observe a festival like this which has in itself something natural and dramatic.*

* For a learned paper upon the Mexican Calendar, Language, &c. &c., by Albert Gallatin, see the first article in the first volume of the Transactions of the American Ethnilogical Society: New-York, 1845.

LETTER XX.

THE CITY OF MEXICO AS IT WAS AT THE CONQUEST.

AFTER having given an account of the antiquities which survived the ravages of the conquerors, (who, with a blind zeal to establish their power and religion, overthrew temple, tower, and almost every record of the Indians,) it has struck me that a notice or sketch of the city of Montezuma, its sovereign and people, would not be uninteresting to even the most careless reader. I have, therefore, gathered from the letters of Cortéz to the Emperor Charles the V., and the history of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, such accounts as appear to be most authentic, not only because they impress us with the grandeur and advanced civilization of the Indians, but because they may probably serve to establish a connection between the inhabitants of the Valley of Mexico and the people who, dwelling farther south, were the builders and occupants of the temples and palaces which have lately been revealed to us in the picturesque pages of Stephens and Catherwood.

"The province which constitutes the principal territory of Montezuma," (says Cortéz in his letter to Charles the V.,) "is circular, and entirely surrounded by lofty and rugged mountains, and the circumference of it is full seventy leagues. In this plain there are two lakes which nearly occupy the whole of it, as the people use canoes for more than fifty leagues round. One of these lakes is of fresh water, and the other, which is larger, is of salt water. They are divided, on one side, by a small collection of high hills, which stand in the centre of the plain, and they unite in a level strait formed between these hills and the high mountains, which strait is a gun-shot wide, and the people of the cities and other settlements *which are in these lakes*, communicate together in their canoes by water, without the necessity of going by land. And as this great salt lake ebbs and flows with the tide, as the sea does, in every flood the water flows from it into the other fresh lake as impetuously as if it were a large river, and consequently at the ebb, the fresh lake flows into the salt.

"This great city of Temixtitlan, (meaning Tenotchtitlan, Mexico,) is founded in this salt lake; and from terra firma to the body of the city, the distance *is two leagues* on which ever side they please to enter it.

"It has four entrances, *or causeways, made by the hand of man, as wide as two horsemen's lances.*

"*The city is as large as Seville and Cordova.* The streets (I mean the principal ones,) are very wide, and others very narrow; *and some of the latter and all the others are one-half land and the other half water*, along which the inhabitants go in their canoes; and all the streets, at given distances, are open, so that the water passes from one to the other; and in all their openings, some of which are very wide, *there are very wide bridges*, made of massive beams joined together and well wrought; and so wide that ten horsemen may pass abreast over many of them."

Bernal Diaz del Castillo gives the following account of the entry of the Spaniards into this city, on the 8th of November, 1519; the period of their first visit to Montezuma, and before they had treacherously obtained possession of the monarch's person.

"We proceeded," says he, "by the great causeway, that runs in a straight line to the city. It was crowded with people, as were all the towers, temples, and causeways, in every part of the lake, attracted by curiosity to behold men and animals such as never before had been seen in these countries. When we arrived at a place where a small causeway turns off to the city Cuyoacan, we were met by a great many of the lords of the court, sent, as they said, before the great Montezuma, to bid us welcome.

"When we arrived near certain towers which were almost close to the city, Montezuma, who was then in the neighborhood, quitted his litter that was borne in the arms of the Princes of Tezcoco, Iztapalapa, Tacuba, and Cuyoacan, under a canopy of the richest materials, ornamented with *green feathers, gold, and precious stones, that hung in the manner of fringe*. He was most richly dressed and adorned, and wore buskins of *pure gold ornamented with jewels*. The princes who supported him were dressed in rich habits, different from those in which they had come to meet us previously; and others, who preceded the monarch, spread mantles on the ground lest his feet should touch it. All who attended him, except the four princes, kept their eyes fixed on the earth, not daring to look him in the face."

They entered the city. "Who," continues Diaz, "could count the multitudes of men, women, and children, who thronged the streets, canals, and terraces, and the *tops of the houses*, on that day!

"The whole of what I saw on this occasion is so strongly imprinted on my memory, that it appears to me as if it had happened only yesterday. Glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us courage to venture on such dangers, and brought us safely through them!"

Lodgings were provided for the Spaniards by the luxurious and lavish monarch—they were fed and entertained at his cost, and presents were made to all. "MONTEZUMA," says the historian, "made signs to one of his principal attendants, to order his officers to bring him certain pieces of gold to give to Cortéz—together with ten loads of fine stuffs which he divided between Cortéz and his captains, and to every soldier he gave *two collars of gold, each worth ten crowns, and two loads of mantles; and*

the gold amounted, in value, to upward of a thousand crowns; and he gave it with an affability and indifference which made him appear a truly magnificent prince."

He then proceeds, after some other details, to give an account of the personal appearance of this sovereign, and of the style and splendor of his court.

"The great Montezuma was, at this time, aged about 40 years, of good stature, well proportioned, and thin. His complexion was much fairer than that of the Indians; he wore his hair short, just covering his ears, with very little beard, well arranged, thin and black. His face was rather long, with a pleasant mien and good eyes; gravity and good-humor were blended together when he spoke. He was very delicate and cleanly in his person, bathing himself every evening. He had a number of mistresses of the first families, and two princesses, his lawful wives; when he visited them, it was with such secrecy that none could know it except his own servants. He was clear of all suspicions of unnatural vices. The clothes which he wore one day he did not put on for four days after. He had set two hundred of his nobility as a guard in apartments adjoining his own. Of these only certain persons could speak to him, and when they went to wait upon him, they took off their rich mantles and put on others of less ornament, but clean. They entered his apartment barefooted, their eyes fixed on the ground, and making three inclinations of the body as they approached him. In addressing the king they said, "Lord—my lord—*great* lord!" When they had finished, he dismissed them with a few words, and they retired with their faces toward him and their eyes fixed on the ground. I also observed, that when great men came from a distance about business, they entered his palace *barefooted*, and in plain habit; and also, that they did not enter the gate directly, but took a circuit in going toward it.

"His cooks had upward of thirty different ways of dressing meats, and they had earthen vessels so contrived as to keep them constantly hot. For the table of Montezuma himself, above three hundred dishes were dressed, and for his guards above a thousand. Before dinner, Montezuma would sometimes *go out and inspect the preparations*, and his officers would point out to him which were the best, and explain of what birds and flesh they were composed; and of those he would eat. But this was more for amusement than anything else.

"It is said, that at times the *flesh of young children* was dressed for him; but the ordinary meats were domestic fowls, pheasants, geese, partridges, quails, venison, Indian hogs, pigeons, hares and rabbits, with many other animals and birds peculiar to the country. This is certain—that after Cortéz had spoken to him relative to the dressing of *human flesh*, it was not practiced in his palace. At his meals, in the cold weather, a number of torches of the bark of a wood which makes no smoke, and has an aromatic smell, were lighted; and, that they should not throw too much heat, screens, ornamented with gold and painted with figures of idols, were placed before them.

"Montezuma was seated on a low throne or chair, at a table proportioned to the height of his seat. The table was covered with white cloths and napkins, and four beautiful women presented him with water for his hands, in vessels which they call *xicales*, with other vessels under them, like plates, to catch the water. They also presented him with towels.

"Then two other women brought small cakes of bread, and, when the King began to eat, a large screen of gilded wood was placed before him, so that during that period people should not behold him. The women having retired to a little distance, four ancient lords stood by the throne, to whom Montezuma, from time to time, spoke or addressed questions, and as a mark of particular favor, gave to each of them a plate of that which he was eating. I was told that these old lords, who were his near relations, were also counsellors and judges. The plates which Montezuma presented to them they received with high respect, eating what was on them without taking their eyes off the ground. He was served in earthenware of Cholula, red and black. While the King was at the table, no one of his guards in the vicinity of his apartment dared, for their lives, make any noise. Fruit of all kinds produced in the country, was laid before him; he ate very little; but, from time to time, a liquor prepared from *coco*, and of a stimulative quality, as we were told, was presented to him in golden cups. We could not, at that time, see whether he drank it or not; but I observed a number of jars, above fifty, brought in, filled with foaming *chocolate*, of which he took some that the women presented him.

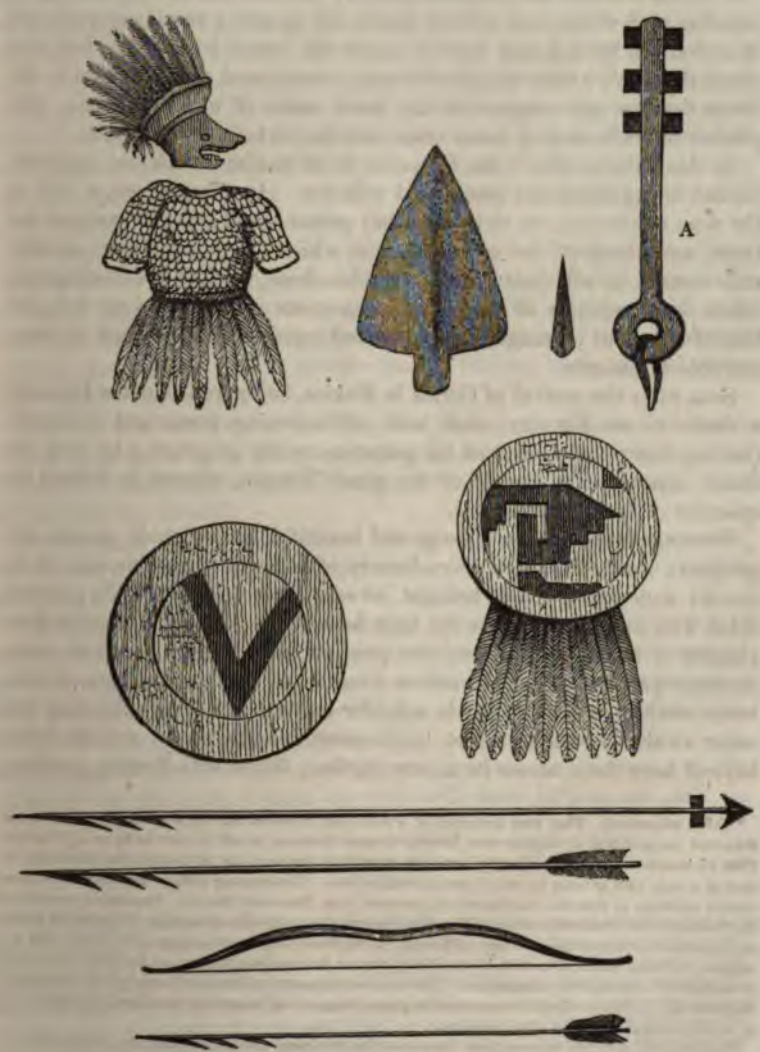
"At different intervals during the time of dinner, there entered certain Indians, humpbacked, very deformed, and ugly, who played tricks of buffoonery; and others who, they said, were jesters. There was also a company of singers and dancers, who afforded Montezuma much entertainment. To these he ordered the vases of chocolate to be distributed. The four female attendants then took away the cloths, and again, with much respect, presented him with water to wash his hands, during which time Montezuma conferred with the four old noblemen formerly mentioned, after which they took their leave with many ceremonies.

"One thing I forgot (and no wonder,) to mention in its place, and that is, that during the time that Montezuma was at dinner, two very beautiful women were busily employed making small cakes* with eggs and other things mixed therein. These were delicately white, and, when made, they presented them to him on plates covered with napkins. Also another kind of bread was brought to him in long leaves, and plates of cakes resembling wafers.

"After he had dined, they presented to him three little canes, highly ornamented, containing liquid-amber, mixed with an herb they call *tobacco;* and when he had sufficiently viewed and heard the singers, dancers, and buffoons, he took a little of the smoke of one of these canes, and then laid himself down to sleep.

* No doubt *tortillas*, or maize cakes—still the staff of life with all the Indians, and, indeed, a favorite and daily food of all classes of Mexicans.

"The meal of the monarch ended, all his guards and domestics sat down to dinner; and, as near as I could judge, above a *thousand plates of those eatables* that I have mentioned, were laid before them, with vessels of foaming chocolate and fruit in immense quantity. For his women, and various inferior servants, his establishment was of a prodigious expense; and we were astonished, amid such a profusion, at the vast regularity that prevailed.



MEXICAN ARMS.

"His *major domo* was, at this time, a prince named Tapica; who kept the accounts of Montezuma's rents *in books which occupied an entire house.*

"Montezuma had two buildings filled with every kind of arms, richly ornamented with gold and jewels; such as shields, large and small clubs like two-handed swords,* and lances much larger than ours, with blades six feet in length, so strong that if they fix in a shield they do not break; and sharp enough to use as razors.

"There was also an immense quantity of bows and arrows, and darts, together with slings, and shields which roll up into a small compass, and in action are let fall, and thereby cover the whole body. He had also much defensive armor of quilted cotton, ornamented with feathers in different devices, and casques for the head, made of wood and bone, with plumes of feathers, and many other articles too tedious to mention."

In this Palace, where the Emperor dwelt in almost oriental splendor, he had his gardens, and ponds, and aviaries. At *Chapultepec*, a hill on the west of the city, he owned another palace, amid groves, fountains and trees, and many of the cypresses with which the grounds were adorned still remain in all their vigor. Besides these, he had his menageries, where every species of wild beast, venomous serpent, curious fish, and bird of beautiful plumage, were gathered together and watched by innumerable attendants.

Soon after the arrival of Cortéz in Mexico, he expressed to the Emperor a desire to see his city; and, with all becoming pomp and ceremony, (having first of all consulted his priests as to the propriety,) he took his future conqueror to the top of the great Temple, whence he beheld the splendor of the Indian capital.

Streets, canals, shrines; large and beautiful houses, amid groves and gardens; markets, where every luxury of fruit and vegetable was to be found; aqueducts, which brought sweet water from the hills; streets filled with artists who wove the most beautifully pictured garments from plumes of birds, or fashioned the precious metals into gorgeous ornaments;—palaces, where the nobles dwelt in all the magnificence of barbaric wealth;—all these lay in splendor beneath him, while the land and water swarmed with an active but superstitious multitude, and the lakes beyond bore them across its silvery surface, dotted with floating gardens,

* Called *miquahuitl*. They were composed of a stout club of wood, into the sides of which square and sharpened pieces of flint or obsidian were fastened at equal distances, as will be seen in figure A in the cut. They are described by Acosta as having been most formidable weapons; and he declares that he has seen the skull of a horse cleft in twain by one of them at a single blow. The foregoing designs are taken either from ancient paintings, or from the arms themselves, preserved in the Museum at Mexico. Opposite to page 433, of Mr. Stephens's first volume of Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, there is a plate representing the sculptured figures on the jamb of a doorway from the ruins of Kabah. In the hands of a kneeling figure in the group, there is a weapon, which the reader, if he takes the trouble to compare the preceding drawing and the plate, will not fail to recognise at a glance, to be a *miquahuitl*. This incontestibly proves an identity of *arms* between the ancient Mexicans and Yucatecos; *and it proves something more, because it is known that these battle-axes were used by the Mexicans at the period of the conquest.*

The sculptured jamb was removed from Yucatan by Mr. Stephens, and arrived safely in the United States. It escaped the loss by fire of the rest of his valuable collection, but was thrown down and broken by a careless and inquisitive street passenger, while unloading from the car that conveyed it from the vessel.

to the foot of mountains, where the sunshine for ever warmed the fruits and flowers into vigorous life.

Such was the city of Mexico, and the style of the Emperor; but it was *not* alone in *externals*, that the nation was great and powerful. It was regulated by good laws, well and speedily administered; the relations of life were recognized and guarded; it fostered a good system of education; the arts were cultivated and encouraged; architecture had advanced to a high degree of excellence; the knowledge of astronomy, and of the calculation of time, was exact and scientific. The Aztecs were bold in war; they had built a vast Empire, springing from a sparse tribe which found its first home among the reeds and marshes of the lake where they had hidden for safety from their foes; and, although their religious rites were brutal and bloody, they still had some glimmering ideas of an invisible and omnipotent God. It was a nation of splendid contradictions, where social elegance and comfort were almost unequalled, and yet where religious brutality was quite as unparalleled.

The sight of this splendid city was too tempting for Cortéz—"The kingdoms of the world were at his feet." He had resolved, before, to attempt the entire subjugation of this people; and the view of this wealth only stimulated his resolution, while the bloody rites* of the Temple aided in exciting his ambition to give another land of idolatry to the control of the Holy Cross.

He soon afterward seized the King, and, as some assert, caused him to be put to death, or to be so exposed that his death was inevitable; yet, when the wonted spirit of the Mexicans was aroused, his troops were driven from the Capital.

He returned with Indian allies. He invested the city with a sort of mimic navy, which he launched on the lake from Tezcoco; and at length, after a severe struggle, the Capital fell into his hands.

"What I am going to say is truth, and I swear, and say Amen to it!" exclaims Bernal Diaz del Castillo, in his quaint style:) "I have read of the destruction of Jerusalem, but I cannot conceive that the mortality *there* exceeded that of Mexico; for all the people from the distant provinces, which belonged to this Empire, had concentrated themselves here, where they mostly died. The streets, and squares, and houses, and the courts of the Tlateloloc† were covered with dead bodies; *we could not*

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* "The walls and pavements of this Temple," says Bernal Diaz, "were so bemeared with blood, that they stank worse than all the slaughter-houses of Castile." Further on he says: "At the door stood frightful idols; by it was a place for sacrifice, and within, *boilers, and pots full of water, to dress the flesh of victims, which was eaten by the priests.* The idols were like serpents and devils: and before them were tables and knives for sacrifice, the place *being covered with blood which was spilt on those occasions.* The furniture was like that of a butcher's stall; and I never gave this accursed building any name except that of HELL! In another temple were the tombs of the Mexican nobility. It was begrimed with *soot and blood.* Next to this, was another, *full of skeletons*, and piles of bones, each kept apart, but regularly arranged."

† Diaz, contrary to other writers, declares *this* to have been the site of the great Temple. It is now the site of the Convent of St. Iago Tlatelolco.

step without treading on them; the lake and canals were filled with them, and the stench was intolerable.

"When all those who had been able, quitted the city, we went to examine it, which was as I have described; and some poor creatures were crawling about in different stages of the most offensive disorders, the consequences of famine and improper food. There was no water; the ground had been torn up and the roots gnawed. The very trees were stripped of their bark; yet, notwithstanding they usually devoured their prisoners, no instance occurred when, amidst all the famine and starvation of this siege, they preyed upon each other. The remnant of the population went, at the request of the conquered Guatimozin, to the neighboring villages, until the town could be purified and the dead removed." Cortéz affirms, that more than fifty thousand perished.

Nor was this all: there seems to have been a disposition, on the part of the conqueror, to obliterate the nation from the face of the earth. As his army advanced gradually into the town in the various attacks made upon it, *the buildings were levelled to the ground;* but when the final conflict had ended, the bigotry of the priesthood was added to the ferocity of the soldier, and hand in hand they went to the work of destruction. After they had secured every article of intrinsic value,—palace and temple were given up to ruin. The materials of which the houses of the nobles and wealthy citizens had been built, were used to fill the canals. Every idol was broken that could be destroyed, while those that were too large to be mutilated by the hand or by gunpowder, were buried in the lake or the squares; and finally, every historical record, paper, and painting, that could be found, was torn and burned, with a fanaticism as ignorant and stupid as it was zealous and bigoted.

From that time, of course, but little has descended to us, except a few fragments of manuscripts, which are now preserved in the royal collections of Berlin, Dresden, Vienna and the Vatican; the idols and images with which the Museum is filled; and the magnificent ruins of Palenque, Uxmal, and Guatamala.

It is impossible for us not to sympathize with the conquered in the fall and subjection of their Empire, notwithstanding the cruelty of their worship. Cortéz was, at best, but a great pirate, around whom a troop of needy adventurers and brave soldiers had gathered, with all the appetite for conquest and the temper of freebooters. It is undeniable, that he was a man of extraordinary capacity. Brave, sagacious, cool, enduring, intrepid; a statesman, orator, historian, soldier, poet; he united in himself every manly attribute and accomplishment, and he added to them an indomitable resolution, which quailed as little before the magnitude or danger of an enterprise, as before the multitudes who were sent to encounter him. He was worthy of a better cause, and the founding of a greater empire.

As for *Montezuma*, he seemed to have had a fatal presentiment of his country's destiny, from the period of his first interview with Cortéz; and

his luxurious habits of life, operating, most probably, upon a temperament naturally unresisting and indolent, induced him to allow a foothold to the Spaniards, who might have been crushed by his armies at a single blow. Instead of striking that blow, he indulged in recollecting the legends of his forefathers; and scarcely had his future conqueror entered the Capital, when he hinted the fate to which his country was at last subjected. "It is long since we knew from our ancestors," said he, "that neither I nor all who inhabit their lands were *originally* of them, but that we are strangers, and came hither from distant places. It was said that a great lord brought our race to these parts and returned to the land of his birth, and yet, came back once more to us. But, in the mean time, those whom he first brought had intermarried with the women of the country; and when he desired them to return again to the land of their fathers they refused to go. He went alone; and ever since have we believed, that from among those who were the descendants of that mighty lord, one shall come *to subdue this land, and make us his vassals!* According to what you declare of the place whence you come, (which is *toward the rising sun,*) and of the great lord who is your King, we must surely believe that he is our natural lord."

Cortéz was by no means disposed to deny it!

LETTER XXI.

MURDER OF THE SWISS CONSUL AT ST. COSME. TACUBA. FESTIVAL OF THE VIRGIN OF REMEDIOS.

Let us return in this letter from the Past to the Present.

The 28th of August was the festival of the Virgin of Remedios, and, accompanied by some friends, I went to an Indian village of that name about nine miles from the city, upon the first rise of the western mountains from the plain of the valley. In passing through the suburb of St. Cosmé, (where many of the pleasantest residences in Mexico are situated, surrounded by tasteful gardens and fountains supplied by the adjacent aqueduct,) the house of M. Mairet, the Swiss Consul, was pointed out to us.

This gentleman was a person of fortune, and lived at St. Cosmé in a tasteful little bachelor establishment, where, according to the custom of this bankless country, he usually kept his money. Most of the dwellings in this quarter are strongly built, and the windows are generally protected by iron bars, so that it would be difficult for robbers to effect an entrance, especially as the occupants usually keep a couple of strong and fierce dogs in the patio and on the azotéa.

One day, however, a coach drove to the front gate about noon, and a man, dressed in the habit of a priest with broad shovel-hat, descended from it accompanied by two others, and stated to the servant who admitted them, that they were exceedingly anxious to procure from Mr. Mairet a skin of parchment, in which article, I believe, he chiefly dealt. As soon as they were admitted within the gate, they locked it, seized the servant, tied him to a pillar, and gagged him. They then proceeded to the house, where they found Mairet alone. They attacked him with knives, cut and wounded him severely, and forced him to disclose the place where he concealed his money. Having got possession of it, and rifled the house of everything valuable, they fled. Poor Mairet died of his wounds; and the robbers (but one of whom was discovered, tried and executed,) escaped with ten thousand dollars.

This is one instance only of the crimes that are even yet often committed throughout the Republic.

In the year 1824, during the high times of old-fashioned bigotry in Mexico, a murder of the most appalling character occurred.

An American named Hayden resided there, and followed the trade of a shoemaker. He was a Protestant, but carefully observed all proper and decorous respect for the Catholic ceremonies and institutions of the country. One day, the Host was passing his house to the dwelling of some dying person, with all the usual pomp and parade of ringing bells and chanting boys; and, as the shops are generally open to the street, Hayden quietly arose from his work-bench, and coming forward, knelt on the sill of his door. He had scarcely prostrated himself, when a person (who is believed to have been an officer,) accosted him, demanding in a rude tone "why he did not advance into the street and kneel?" Hayden replied, that he thought it proper for him to kneel where he was. Scarcely had he uttered this when the soldier laid his hand on the hilt of his sword as if to draw. Hayden perceived this, and stepped toward his counter to seize a boot-tree for defence; but before he could reach it, the soldier had plunged his sword through the poor man's back, directly into the heart, and he fell dead on the spot.

An American, who was in the shop at the time, rushed to arrest the murderer and give the alarm, but the villain had fled—the crowd closed round him, no one pursued, and no one took means to recognize him!

Nor was this all. Difficulty was first experienced in obtaining permission from the authorities to bury our unfortunate countryman; next, no coachman would take the body in his carriage, and the Consul was obliged to receive it in his private coach; next, the funeral procession was pursued by a crowd, which, gathering in formidable numbers as the train moved along the streets of Plateros and San Francisco, pelted it with stones and other missiles, until Mr. Black (who is now our Consul in Mexico,) was obliged to halt the procession at the Accordada, and ask a guard of soldiers from the commanding officer as an escort to the grave at Chapultepec. The guard was given, ordered to load with ball-cartridges, and as they departed the officer exclaimed—"Blessed is the land where there are no friars!"

Notwithstanding the presence of the guard, the Consul was struck on the breast by a stone while reading the solemn service at the grave.

Crowds had followed the funeral from the city, even to the distant graveyard; and when they returned, it was rumored among the léperos that the "American had been buried with a quantity of clothing, bottles of wine, and money to pay the expences of his journey." This superstitious tale had the due effect; and although a man had been hired to watch the grave, yet soon after the interment it was broken open, and the body was found stripped of its clothes and flung naked on the ground. A reward of $2000 was offered by the foreigners, but no traces of the murderer or of the human hyenas were ever discovered.

FESTIVAL OF THE VIRGIN OF REMEDIOS.

I was particularly tempted to witness the celebration of this festival, because it was strictly an Indian one, in which many of the old superstitions of the tribes were mingled with the Catholic rites.

The morning was beautiful, and, although there had been much rain the preceding night, the roads were dry and hard, and the whole face of nature looked sweet and clean. The road swarmed with people. The majority of these was of course composed of females, scarcely one of whom (from thirteen upward,) was without a baby strapped to her back; and all jogged along in that little trot which is peculiar to the movement of the Indians.

INDIAN WOMEN AND INFANTS.

Besides these, there were files of *arrieros;* crowds of Indians, with charcoal in huge panniers on their backs; others with turkies; asses laden with hay—the hay covering the whole of the little animal so completely, that at a short distance he looked like a self-moving stack. Then, again, there was a better class of the natives, who had contrived to hire a couple of planks covered with a mat-awning, swung upon wheels, in the shafts of which they drove a lean and half-starved mule,—while among the crowd dashed our postillion, with his antediluvian vehicle. We were, in fact, the only foreigners on the road, except a band of valiant French hair-dressers, who, taking advantage of the holiday, had sallied forth with brightly shining guns and bloodless bags, to do execution on an army of snipes that lay behind its intrenchments of marsh and grass.

The feast, I have said, is purely Indian in its celebration at this shrine. You will remember when the Spaniards were expelled from the city—on that dreadful evening, which has since passed into history by the name of the "noche triste," or "*sad night*"—that they retreated through the village of Tacuba, then an Indian town of some importance, and encamped on the adjacent heights. Some of the forces strayed still farther westward, and, quitting the shores of the lake, slept on the first rise of the mountains. There they passed a panic-struck night, and in the morning, a small doll, which had dropped from the knapsack of a Spanish soldier, (the bruised relic, doubtless, of some pet baby he had left at home,) was found on a maguey, or aloe. Lo! it was proclaimed, by the finder, to be a miraculous image of the Holy Virgin—a token of approaching success and safety—and the doll was thenceforward sanctified! When the Spanish power became firmly fixed in Mexico, a church was built on the spot of the miraculous visit, and the shrine was endowed with the votive offerings of the wealthy and superstitious.

Having appeared to the soldiers just at the critical moment, she was called the Virgin of "Remedios," or Remedies—and from that day to this, she has been regarded as the special patroness of the ill, the unhappy, the sorrowful, and unlucky. If the "rainy season" does not come soon enough for the hopes of the Indian farmer, so that he can raise his corn and *frijoles*, she is prayed to. If it lasts too long, she is besought. If the small-pox, cholera, or fevers rage, she is the pious medicine; and ever with success, because her image is generally brought to the infected district, from her healthy mountain country-seat, when the malady is abating. It is said, however, that there was a mistake about her in the case of the last small-pox that prevailed in the Capital. She was produced too soon! The convalescent came to return thanks; those who had it in its incipient state, to be relieved; and the healthful, to be spared entirely—the result was, a frightful spreading of the infection among the multitudes who prostrated themselves before the image.

The church has, of course, made a fine revenue out of this miraculous power of the Virgin; and I have been told that she was frequently rented out to the different parishes, at the rate of five or seven thousand dollars *per*

dem, according to the emergency of the matter, and the faculty of the inhabitants to pay. Disease being the most selfish of all demands upon a man's purse, he will more readily rid himself of its attacks by a fee and a prayer, than by a doctor and a nauseous dose. A piece of painted wood and an opportune ejaculation, are much more palatable than the nostrum and long face of even the kindest physician.

After passing through the village of Tacuba, (now only remarkable for a few Indian remains, among which are part of a Mexican pyramid, in the rear of a fine church erected by Cortéz, and a noble cypress, doubtless of the days of Montezuma,) we ascended the hill among the increasing crowd of people on foot, in carts, on mules and horses. The church is surrounded by a few miserable huts of adobe, which scarcely merit the name of a village; and as we approached the edifice we were forced to leave our carriage, on account of the dense crowd of léperos and Indians. I am confident, that not less than seven thousand were then upon the spot.

There was but a narrow path to the church-gate, and on each side of it were stalls, tables, and mats of the humbler classes, covered with fruits, dried meats, and *pulque*—the latter of which, from the glibness of the tongue and the incessant hum of voices around, must have been pretty freely circulated. Gamblers, too, were not wanting: there was one fellow with his dice, and a dozen with *monté*,—balls rolling; cards shuffling; venders crying their merchandise; Indians chattering in the Mexican and Ottomy dialects; the yell of a thousand squalling babies—and the bells tolling! All combined to make a perfect Babel of noise, yet I am in considerable doubt whether my ears suffered more than my olfactories.

I shouldered my way through the crowd, and entered the large courtyard in front of the church, which has once been a tasteful edifice, surrounded by a corridor, with a roof supported by stout columns, inclosing a beautiful garden. All is now in ruins, and the pillars of half the corridor lie in heaps in the corners, filled with filth and rubbish, with gigantic aloes growing in their crannies.

From the steeple of the church to the top of the gateway, five ropes were stretched, and a large flower made of silk, in the shape of a pomegranate, was ascending and descending on each of them, drawn up and let down by men stationed on the azotéa of the edifice. Among these flowers was an image of Juan Diego, the virtuous Indian to whom the Virgin presented the miraculous picture, which is now in the Sanctuary of Guadalupe. Juan, I imagine, was a sort of invited guest from one Virgin to the other, and seemed to enjoy himself vastly as he was jerked up and down on the rope by the Indians, who varied their task by an occasional pull at the bells.

When we entered the church mass had not yet begun, and the edifice was comparatively empty. Indeed, I did not find it (except once during the day) very crowded with Indians, who seemed better satisfied with their goat-meat and pulque in the fresh air out of doors.

The altar and the rail around it were, as usual, made of the precious metals, and aloft was placed an image of the Virgin, in a rich tabernacle. Candles were lighted around it, and some persons were chanting a service accompanied by the organ, while the Indians, in their rags, spread themselves in kneeling groups over the floor. We passed into the sacristy where we met two Augustine monks, who were engaged in baptizing or blessing a dirty Indian baby. The mother—in her torn *tilma* and petticoat reaching to her knees—knelt before the *padre* holding the child, who amused itself by playing with his reverence's robe while the requisite prayer was recited. The father—in his leather breeches and torn blanket—meanwhile leaned against the wall, twirling his tattered hat, with open mouth, and eyes in a stupid stare of pious wonderment. As soon as the monk had concluded the service, he stepped forward, handed him a couple of cents, and both parents, with a sort of adoring kiss bestowed on the friar's hand, departed. Our party comprised the *only whites* in that crowd of thousands.

As soon as the *padrecitos* had got through their ceremonies over two or three more babies, and received their copper fees, Mr. Black mentioned to them our desire to see the figure of the Virgin. A sacristan was immediately sent to conduct us to the room back of the altar, where, mounting to the tabernacle, and peeping cautiously around the shrine, so as not to be seen by the congregation in the body of the church, we caught a glimpse of the figure. It is a beautiful waxen-faced doll, about a foot high, in a stiff satin dress, sticking out very much at the bottom as if with hoops, and the whole figure rests on an aloe of solid silver. I observed some pearls on the dress which had a very waxen look, together with some diamonds, that seemed quite as brilliant as if they had been manufactured in Paris by the dozen. When I descended, I expressed my surprise to the half-breed attending us, who (with a very significant smile, and that indescribable motion of the long forefinger slowly from right to left, peculiar to the Mexicans, and which is as much as to say, "You know nothing about it,") explained the mystery. *The real image was not there!* Diamonds, doll, pearls, petticoats, emeralds, and all the other finery had been taken to the Cathedral; and he intimated, that in these revolutionary times so much wealth was more secure within hail of the palace sentinels, than amid the lonely wastes of this mountain church. Besides which, he hinted that the present figure was handsomer, newer, and, on the whole, good enough for the Indians; who adored it with quite as much fervor, and quite as successfully as the famed original.

We sallied forth from the chapel as the mass commenced. Gradually the church began to fill with the half-naked Indian crowd. Deputations of natives from the different villages next arrived, bearing their offerings of flowers and wax candles to the Virgin, headed by a band of Indian musicians with their tom-tom drum and flageolets, making a low monotonous music. The offerings were taken to the altar, under banners made of flowers; and after a wild dance of the Indians to their music

before the image, they were deposited in the sacristy. A constant succession of these oblations poured in until near two o'clock; when the morning services being finished, the image was taken from the tabernacle and placed under a canopy, while a priest bore the consecrated wafer, and the procession began its march. All heads were at once uncovered, and I went to the upper story of the church to have a better view of the ceremony. At the door of the church stood a ragged Indian, with a large firework on his head, made in the shape of a horse, surrounded with squibs and rockets; behind him were five men and a woman from one of the villages, neatly dressed, their heads being covered with red silk or cotton handkerchiefs. The men bore thin staves in their hands, and small coops, made of cane, were strapped on their backs. The woman held a covered basket before her, and one of the men thrummed a guitar, giving forth the same monotonous tune of the flageolets and drum. As soon as the procession reached the portal, the whole crowd knelt, and a number of small rockets and cannons were fired by the Indians. The huge flowers—which I have before described as ascending and descending on ropes from the church tower to the gate—were pulled open by a secret spring, and a shower of rose leaves fell from them over the passing priests and images. Juan Diego's *knees were bent* by some equally secret machinery, and he continued on his slack-rope pilgrimage through the air. The flageolet and the drum were once more put into requisition, and the Indian with the horse-firework, accompanied by six others, began retreating in a *trotting dance* as the holy image approached —whirling and hopping to the barbarous music, ever careful to keep their faces to the Virgin. Suddenly, an Indian stole behind the one who bore aloft the firework, and touched its match. At this moment the bells began to chime,—and thus, amid their clang, the detonation of the squibs, cannons and rockets, and the loud cracking of the exploding horse, the procession sallied from the court-yard to the village, to make a tour of the plaza among the gamblers, *pulque* shops, and fruit-sellers; all of whom suspended their operations for the moment, and knelt to the sacred figure.

After the return of the Virgin to the church, there was another grand explosion of fireworks on a wheel, and more cannons were discharged. The multitude then gathered together in groups, and made their frugal meal of fruits, *dulce*, *tortillas*, and the never-failing *frijoles* and *chilé*. By four o'clock, the majority of the Indians had *trotted* off once more to their villages, some of which were at a distance of not less than twenty or thirty miles.

The whole of the ceremony of this day, seemed to me nothing more than an Indian "corn-dance;" and it is, no doubt, among the simple-minded Indians, a festival of thankfulness to God for the crops with which the bountiful seasons have blessed them; in other words, a substitute for the sacrifices which they once made of fruits, flowers, and birds, to their goddess Centeotl.

The fault is in the permission of these idolatrous rites, before the *mock image* of another image; although it may perhaps be urged, that as the Catholic is the "blending of the rituals of many nations," there is no harm in these innocent Indians being allowed to mix up the relics of the worship of their fathers, so long as the whole service is offered in honor of the ever living God.

During the morning, I climbed to the top of the church tower, through a swarm of Indians, who were hived in a set of mud-floored rooms around the inner court, and the upper portion of the sacred edifice, which they were allowed to occupy as a sort of public *caravanserai* during the period of their pilgrimage. Such masses of dirt, filth, and personal impurity, it is difficult even to imagine; and I am happy to say, that with the exception of the festival at Guadalupe, it was the only exhibition of the sort that I saw of the Indians while in Mexico.

But I was repaid for my disgust on reaching the top of the church tower. The view was magnificent, as is, indeed, almost every prospect from the heights in this valley. The church stands alone, on the bleak unsheltered side of a mountain. Behind it the steeps rise rapidly, with deep glens descending from them, watered by many streams, and spanned, in wild and solitary grandeur, by a lofty aqueduct of fifty arches. But to the east lay the lovely valley—its plain—its silvery lakes—and turreted city nestling on its borders; while, far in the distance, more than forty miles away, rose the gray volcanoes, capped with their eternal snows and clouds.

I cannot conclude an account of this Indian scene, without offering my testimony in favor of the temper and temperance of the natives. In all the scenes of that day, spent among so many thousand Indians, I saw but three or four at all intoxicated. There was neither fighting, nor quarrelling; but all seem to have met together for the purpose of an annual frolic, and all carried it out in that pleasant spirit. The most tipsy man in the crowd was the *Corregidor*—an old, lazy, leather-breeched savage, who trotted among the multitude all day long, lecturing the Indians on sobriety and good behavior. It was his misfortune, however, that the duties of his station carried him more frequently to the *pulque* shops than elsewhere, nor was he allowed to quit them without a parting glass, to which he was pressed by the numerous friends with whom all great men are afflicted. I left him hiccuping a lesson, and winking his eyes very slowly at an old Indian; who, having been his predecessor in office, had fallen into disgrace from the potency of *pulque*. It was the fatal misfortune of all the *Corregidors!*

I told you, in the previous part of these letters, that the *true Virgin* had been removed to the Cathedral in Mexico; and that she stands in that temple on her shrine of silver, enjoying the title to three petticoats embroidered with pearls, diamonds and emeralds.

If she possesses the power to cure the maladies of others, she has not, alas! the skill to heal her own. She is in a most dilapidated condition!

Her whole height is not more than a foot, but you cannot number the scratches, knocks, and bruises, that her poor little frame has suffered! Her color is gone—both her eyes, I believe, are out—her nose is knocked off, and there is rather a large hole in one corner of her mouth. The *padres* declare, that all who attempt to repair her charms sicken and die. Indeed, in the midst of all her finery and ornaments, she reminds one of some shrew of a spinster, who, after wasting her stock of charms on a thoughtless world, makes up for them on every public occasion, by a display of lace and diamonds, hiding, if possible, each wrinkle by a gem.

LETTER XXII.

CARNIVAL. LENT. HOLY WEEK.

One of the gayest seasons in Mexico is that of the Carnival; and although the amusements are not so numerous or splendid as those of Rome and Naples, yet there is more stirring life and more public exhibition of joy and pleasure than at other periods of the year, among this staid and reserved population.

The theatres are converted into ball-rooms, and decorated with great taste; masters of ceremonies are regularly appointed; and the boxes are filled every night with the *beau-monde*—brilliant with diamonds—while the pit and stage are covered with groups of motley maskers. Within the few last years, the fashionables have refrained from participating in the *ruses* of masquerade; and the floor has thus been abandoned chiefly to the French hair-dressers, pastry cooks, and milliners of the *calle Plateros*, who frisk about with as much gayety as if they were at the grand Opera of their beloved Paris. I went once or twice to witness these amusements; but confess that I had quite enough of them, when, on venturing once to stand up in a quadrille with some unknown fair one, I found an unmasked *negro* (the leader of one of the orchestras in the city,) take the place of my *vis-à-vis with a white woman!* I plead guilty to a prejudice against such exhibitions.

The Carnival over—Lent is observed with considerable rigor until Holy Week. As the ceremonies of that season are not without their peculiarities, I will give you some descriptions of them; and I know not how I can do so better than by extracts from my journal of the period.

JOURNAL.

18*th March, Friday.* This is the festival of the Virgin of Dolores. It is impossible to trace many of the old customs of the Church, in a country where the ritual is often made up of so many odd and fantastic notions, except by supposing that the idea of the original founders was, to attract the Indians by as many new devices as they could ingraft upon their regular services.

On the festival of Mary, the mother of our Saviour, (who is worshipped here under so many metamorphoses,) the ceremonies are not alone conducted in the churches. There is scarcely a house in the city, where a little shrine is not erected, and adorned with a profusion of glittering ornaments and blooming flowers. Glasses and vases of colored waters flash amid innumerable lamps and wax candles; while the most splendid jewels of the mistress of the mansion adorn the sacred image. The floors of the dwellings are strewn with roses, leaving a path for visitors, and music and refreshments welcome all who are in habits of intimacy with the family. In this gorgeous display, there is considerable rivalry, and it is a feather in a family's cap to have its Virgin spoken of as—*par excellence—the* saint of the season.

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19*th—Saturday*. This is another festival—that of "*El Castisimo Patriarca Sr. S. José, patron principal de la Republica, y N. Señora de la Piedad.*" It is a festival, in other words, of San José and of the Virgin Mary, under *another* name. There were solemn services in the churches.

20*th—Palm Sunday*. At eleven I went to the Cathedral, to hear high mass. The chief altar was shrouded with purple drapery, and all the ornaments were covered. The Archbishop sat under a velvet canopy fringed with gold, and the edifice was filled with a motley, palm-bearing congregation of ladies, léperos, cavaliers, and Indians. The service was odd. Two clergymen mounted pulpits on each side of the altar, while another took his stand in the middle of the steps leading to it. All had books before them, and palm branches in their hands, as had, also, the Archbishop and his suite of servitors. The priests in the pulpit, and the one on the steps, then proceeded to chant a sort of dramatic scene in badly pronounced Latin; and the whole ended with wretched music from the choir and the organ.

While this service was going on, there seemed to be great indifference in the demeanor of the well-dressed men. The ladies sat on the dirty floor, and with their books open before them, read away for very life; ever and anon crossing their foreheads, mouths and bosoms; while the whole of the lower classes stood by like the audience at some strange drama in an unknown language, which they thought as queer as it was unintelligible. The Indians, especially, who were grouped around the base of the columns, in all their usual dirt and rags, appeared particularly surprised at the *Latin*. Among the multitude, I could not help noticing an old, vicious-looking lépero, (a scarred veteran in crime and villainy, if we may judge by his countenance) who was extraordinarily zealous in pounding his breast, as if exorcising an evil and tormenting spirit.

After the ceremony was over, no one omitted going to the basins and sprinkling with holy water. The Indians, as usual, enjoyed this privilege greedily; and after devoutly crossing themselves, spirted a quantity of the fluid in their eyes, and last of all, put a handfull over their hair and faces. The infants, especially, came in for a wholesome ablution.

23rd. I went to the Cathedral this afternoon to hear the *Miserère*. It was a different affair from that of the Sistine Chapel, where the agonizing music is wailed out by the Pope's *eunuchs*. I only remained until four or five candles had been extinguished on the great candlestick of ebony, inlaid with silver. The music was execrable.

24th. This day, which is elsewhere perhaps the saddest and holiest to the spiritual-minded of Christ's Church—preparing the soul for the dreadful trials of to-morrow—is in Mexico one of the gayest of the season.

From 10 o'clock in the morning, not a horse or vehicle of any sort is permitted to appear on the street, and all who venture abroad must do so on foot. In the olden time, this was no doubt intended to mark the day with peculiar solemnity; both by dispensing with one of the most needful luxuries of the upper classes, and detaining the gay and fashionable at home, or inducing them to go on humble and prayerful pilgrimage to the churches. It is now, however, but an excuse for ostentation; and as at all other seasons of the year fashion has made it imperative for no lady to walk the streets, so has fashion made it the rule for the sex to appear on this day, apparelled in all the splendor their purses will admit. Silks, satins, velvets, embroidery, lace, jewels, diamonds, ball-dresses, dinner-dresses —every species of vesture to attract attention and envy, and these again are changed several times in the course of the day! For weeks previous the mantuamakers are all bought up—not a stitch is to be had for love or money—and, on Holy Thursday, the cunning of their needles is displayed for once in the year to the rude and open air.

The professed purpose of this display is to visit, on foot, *seven* of the churches—which are adorned with all their plate, jewels, flowers, and finery, for the occasion, while their floors are spread with the richest carpets.

Although there is much that is singular to Protestants who are accustomed to a simple ritual, in the splendor of the Roman Church in Italy and France, yet there is always a picturesque fitness of the ceremony to the season, and there is an evident meaning in its dramatic effect, illustrating the incidents of the time. In those countries, we can never free ourselves from the associations of the place and the ceremony upon which there are no corrupt grafts of heathenism. The rites at the altar are gorgeous, but chaste and beautiful; the music is select, and suitable to the moment; the temple in which you kneel, is hallowed by historical memorials; the dead of hundreds of years—illustrious through all time—

rest in the carved tombs around you; and the master-pieces of the greatest artists realize once more, on their eloquent canvas, the triumphs of saints and martyrs. But not so here. The ritual is Indian, rather than civilized or intellectual. The show is tasteless and barbaric. The altars display a jumble of jewelry, sacred vessels, and utensils of the precious metals mixed up with glass through which is reflected the tints of colored water, and the whole is overlaid with fruits and flowers. It is a mixture of the church and apothecary shop. Instead of the glorious pictures of the old masters, you have innumerable bad figures, badly drawn and worse colored, set in frames, the gilding and carving of which form the greatest attraction; and in place of the airs of Mozart and Haydn, you have the music of the last Opera, and the favorite *morceaux* of Robert le Diable.

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When the carriages cease to roll to-day, at ten o'clock, the *bells* are also silenced. Not a clapper is allowed to strike against bell-side until next Saturday. Yet, in order not to be without incessant noise in the streets, they have substituted *rattles*, and you scarcely meet a youth who has not one of these discordant instruments in his hand. The rattles are usually made of wood and bone, surmounted by the wax-figure of a bird, baby, or even, sometimes, a *naked Venus;* but for the higher classes they are of richly chased silver with tasteful ornaments, and become the fashionable presents of the season.

The streets are alive with the gay throng, and I visited the churches of San Francisco, La Señora de Loreto, the Cathedral, Santa Clara, and the Profesa. *San Francisco* and *La Profesa* divide the fashionable world; but the old Jesuits seem to have carried the day with the ladies.

I took a seat on the benches, placed against the pillars which support the roof of the church, as I found it to be the custom for men to sit, while the aisle of the church is occupied by the kneeling females. When I entered the edifice there were but few at their devotions, but the crowd gradually increased, and in half an hour the building was filled with the gentle hum of a thousand lips in prayer.

Near me knelt a lady, whose dress must have cost thousands in this expensive country. She wore a purple velvet robe embroidered with white silk, white satin shoes, and silk stockings; a *mantilla* of the richest white blonde lace fell over her head and shoulders, and her ears, neck, and fingers were blazing with diamonds. By her side, and almost touching, crouched an Indian, in rags scarcely sufficient to hide her nakedness, with wild dishevelled hair, bare legs, and a vacant stare from the gorgeous altar to the gorgeous dame! And so, over the whole church, the floor was a checker-board of ladies and *léperos*—of misery and pride!

At a little distance knelt a group of fashionable girls under the guardianship of their mamma, and followed by a female servant—a substitute for the old *dueña*. After the sign of the cross and the bow to the altar, the two lines of *beaux* on each side of the edifice, first attracted the attention of the penitents; but their prayer-books were immediately opened, the forehead, mouth, and breast were again crossed, and they hummed a prayer, with an occasional *aside* to mother or sister, in the midst of their devotion. After this mingled occupation of prayer, chatting, crossing, and criticism had been carried on for ten minutes, they closed their books, sank from their knees backward on the floor, and sitting thus on the boards, threw aside their *mantillas* so as to display a pet dimple or a pet diamond. Presently, remembering that there were other churches to visit, they rose slowly, and lounged off to another chapel to bring up the arrears of their *aves* and *paters*.

I have thus sketched both the street-walking and church-praying of to-day, but there was one church which I must mention specially. The Chapel of "*Nuestra Señora de Loreto*" is situated some distance from the centre of fashion in Mexico, and is considered quite a pilgrimage by the pedestrians who walk but once a year. I visited it, both in the morning and at night. In the early part of the day, the crowd was small; but after sunset it was almost impossible to effect an entrance, notwithstanding the doors and square in front were guarded by sentinels with fixed bayonets.

The church was transformed into a grove of orange, lemon, and flowering shrubbery; and the blaze of a multitude of wax torches was reflected from the altar, around which the twelve Apostles were seated at the Last Supper, amid a pile of silver and gold plate and jewels, arranged in a multitude of odd devices, not only on the table but from the floor to the ceiling. In grotesque contrast with all this splendor, there were common oranges sprinkled with tin foil, and twopenny glass decanters filled with dyed waters.

As I entered from the front door of this edifice, the first thing that attracted my notice was a side altar converted into an arbor, in the centre of which was a *well*, with Christ and the woman of Samaria beside it. The lady had been fitted out by a most fashionable mantuamaker, in a costume of blue satin picked out with pink, and while she leaned gracefully on a silver pitcher, resting on the edge of the well, our Saviour stood opposite in a mantle of purple velvet, embroidered with gold, and covered with a *Guyaquil sombrero!*

A short distance from this, in the place of another side altar, next to the chief one, was the representation of the entombment of our Lord. The body, swathed in linen, was laid in a *glass coffin*. "Mary the Mother," dressed in a full suit of black velvet, with a fine cambric handkerchief in hand, stood among the shrubbery at its foot. In the foreground, two little urchins of waxen angelhood, also dressed in black velvet, (with black wings and skirts looped up in front, so as to display their

neatly-turned ankles in richly-worked stockings, and somewhat more of the leg than befits other persons than opera dancers,) put themselves in such an attitude, that you might naturally imagine they were in the act of pirouetting off to the music of a piano in the opposite corner, that gave forth the most fashionable waltzes and airs from the operas. Two dogs, (emblems, I suppose of "watchfulness,") but who did not seem to understand their duty very well, amused themselves, meanwhile, by wandering about among the pots and smelling at the flowers!

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Returning from Nuestra Señora de Loreto, I found the streets crammed with people, among whom were crowds of ladies dressed quite as splendidly as in the morning; many of them still wore their diamonds, notwithstanding the imminent danger of robbery in such a concourse. The stores were all closed, the bells were silenced, and all was quiet but the hum of the crowd and the crack of the thousand rattles that filled the air like a meadow of grasshoppers.

I went to the Profesa and found a similar display. I continued on to San Francisco, and there beheld the most tasteful and least childish of all these exhibitions. The walls of the church were hung with large pictures, portraying parts of the life of Christ; and over the altar was a large architectural design, the outlines of which were marked with lights fastened on the canvas, so that the whole picture seemed drawn with fire. The effect was novel and beautiful, and the better for a misty atmosphere in the church arising from the multitude of candles.

In another of the seven chapels of San Francisco, a figure of our Lord, as large as life, was seated at the foot of the altar, crowned with thorns and bleeding at every pore; while, at a side altar, was the Virgin, (again in becoming black velvet,) with a large straight sword thrust through her heart, and her eyes upturned like a dying Cleopatra. The crowd here was immense, and it was necessary to preserve order by stationing guards at all the doors.

As I passed down the street, I observed that numbers of booths had been erected at the principal corners and in the plaza. They are neatly made of reeds and matting, and their counters are woven over in front with sweet clover interlaced with flowers. Orgeat and other refreshing drinks only are sold in them, and in the whole throng of this day of idleness I have not met a drunken Indian or lépero.

The Cathedral was also lighted up like the rest of the churches, and there was a similar display of ornaments. In the middle of the left aisle a silver altar had been erected, since yesterday, which reached nearly to the ceiling; but it was tastelessly crowded with figures of saints and wooden pillars, painted to imitate marble. On this altar was displayed the Holy Sacrament during the period in which no consecration of the elements is permitted by the Church.

At the doors of most of these sacred buildings ladies were seated, who received alms on large silver dishes, and rewarded you with a sweet smile; but in the sacristy of the Cathedral a system of begging was carried on that I did not notice elsewhere. It was a regular fair for Indulgences.

The body of our Lord, in wax, was laid on a bier near the door as you entered from the Cathedral, and near it, another figure was set up, representing him as he came bleeding and wasted from the scourgers. Close to these two figures sat priests begging every passer for a donation in return for indulgences. "Ten years' indulgence for an alms to the Holy Sepulchre," said one of them, with the plate before him;—and "twenty years' indulgence for an alms for the redemption of the faithful in captivity," shouted a tall blue-gowned Franciscan, who stood near the door as you went out, over-bidding his less liberal competitor between the figures.

25th, Good Friday. The gay dresses of yesterday are exchanged for deep black, worn by both men and women, and the day is celebrated by solemn services. I missed seeing the "descent from the cross," in the church of Balbanera, which is said to be performed by puppets, and to be admirably well executed.

26th. This is the last day of the ceremonies, and at half-past nine in the morning the injunction was taken from the bells and carriages. The streets were of course immediately filled with all the equipages of the city, whose postillions only waited for the first sound from the church-towers, to dash out of their court-yards. The clang of the bells was incessant, and at the same moment, the air was filled with the smoke and explosion of myriads of crackers and fireworks, called "*Judases*" and "*heretics*" extended on ropes across the streets. The multitudes of dogs with which the city is infested, scared at the unusual racket, howled along the streets, and the great amusement of the léperos was to trip the poor beasts with ropes as they dashed wildly over the crowded thoroughfares. And so ended in smoke, yells, jingling, carriage-rolling, horse-tramping, Judas-bursting, dog-tripping, and folly, this farcical caricature of the most awful event in the history of religion. In the vanity of personal ostentation its effect is thrown away on the better classes, while it is entirely lost in the barbaric spectacle and tinsel show which are got up to bewilder and surprise the ignorant and low.

LETTER XXIII.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF MEXICO. CHAPULTEPEC. TACUBAYA, AND THE MURDER OF MR. EGERTON. ST. ANGEL. THE DESIERTO.

I HAVE intimated to you several times in these letters, that it is exceedingly dangerous to go out of the gates of the city of Mexico alone or unarmed. Indeed, a foreigner scarcely ever rides even as far as Tacubaya without his pistols in his holsters and a trusty servant behind him.

Skirting one of the aqueducts which terminates in the southern part of the city, you pass westward over the plain to Chapultepec—the "Hill of the Grasshopper." It is an insulated porphyritic rock, rising near the former margin of the lake, and is said to have been one of the spots designated by the Aztecs, as a place where they tarried on their emigration from the north in search of a final resting-place, which was to be denoted by "an eagle sitting on a rock and devouring a serpent."

At the foot of this solitary hill the plain spreads out on every side, in all the beauty of extreme cultivation, while a belt of noble cypresses girdles its immediate base. One of these trees still bears the name of "Montezuma's cypress,"* and there is no doubt, from the remains of the gardens, groves, tanks and grottoes still visible about this beautiful spot, that it was one of the favorite resorts of the monarch and court of the Mexican Empire. The tradition is that the Emperor retired from the sultry city to these pleasant shades, which were filled, in his day, with every luxury that wealth could procure or art devise. It would have been difficult to select a spot better adapted for a royal residence. From the top of the modern Palace (now a military school) erected by the Viceroy Galvez, there is a charming prospect over the valley and lakes. You sweep your eye around a border of gigantic mountains, while at the bottom of the hill cluster the dense groves of cypress—the genuine antiquities of Mexico—old, perhaps already at the period of the conquest. Nor is it the least agreeable association with these venerable relics, that they are unconnected with any of the bloody rites of religion, but are eloquent witnesses of the better portions of Mexican character.

* It measures 41 feet in circumference, and 81, over some excrescences.

CHAPULTEPEC.

By a road leading south-westwardly from Chapultepec, at the distance of about a mile, you reach Tacubaya, a town somewhat celebrated in the history of Spanish diplomacy. It is a quiet country village, containing many delightful residences of the Mexican merchants, and is chiefly remarkable for a palace of the Archbishop surrounded by beautiful gardens and groves, from the azotéa of which there is one of the finest views of the volcano of Popocatepetl and the neighboring mountain of Iztaccihuatl.

On the 28th of April, 1842, the city of Mexico was thrown into commotion by the recital of a dreadful double murder that had been committed on the previous night in this village.

Mr. Egerton was an English artist—a landscape painter of great eminence—who had resided several years in the Republic, and had just returned again to the country from a visit to England, bringing with him a lovely young woman as his wife. After residing a few months in town, he rented a small establishment at Tacubaya, to which he repaired with his lady, and during the period that he remained there, but seldom visited the Capital. Yet he sometimes came in to see his brother, and on the evening of the day preceding the fatal event, he left the city on his return home.

As soon as he reached Tacubaya, he went out accompanied by his wife, to take their usual evening walk; and this is the last that is known of them with any certainty. In the course of the night, the little dog that usually followed them in their rambles returned to the house alone.

On the morning of the 28th, some *péons*, who were going from the village to work in the fields, discovered Mr. Egerton's body lying on the road. The spot was soon thronged by the villagers, and, after a thorough search in the neighborhood, the body of his wife was found in an adjoining field of aloes.

Those who saw the shocking sight, describe it as the most horrible they ever beheld. Egerton had evidently been slain, after a severe struggle; a rattan, which he still held firmly in the grasp of death, was cut and broken; his body was pierced with eleven wounds, and, though he had been dead near eight hours when discovered, his teeth were still clenched as if in anger, his eyes wide open, and his hair stiff on end! The poor lady was stripped naked, with the exception of her stockings and shoes; one wound, as if with a small-sword, penetrated her right breast; marks of strangulation were around her throat; her stomach was bitten, and she had evidently been violated.

It is impossible to describe the horror with which all classes in Mexico received this dreadful tale. The British Minister and Consul, and Mr. Egerton's brother, immediately instituted the most diligent search for the perpetrators of these crimes; but, although several men were arrested, the monsters remain to this day undetected.

A small wooden cross, near a tangled thicket, adjoining a ruined church, marks the fatal spot, and bears an inscription imploring your prayers for the murdered pair.

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In a nook at the northwest corner of the city of Mexico, as you pass out of the gate of St. Cosmé, is the English Burying-ground, bowered among trees and flowers toward the town, and open, with a sweet lowland prospect, toward the setting sun; and here were deposited, side by side, the unfortunate victims. Few spectacles have ever been more sorrowful, than the group of "strangers in a strange land," who gathered around the grave of their murdered friends on the melancholy evening of their interment.

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At the distance of a few feet from them, repose the remains of William McClure, a countryman, dear to American science. The Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, of which he was so long the President and benefactor, erected a small marble monument over his grave, and surrounded it with an iron rail. A short time before I left Mexico, the rail was torn down, the monument upset, and, on the same night, the newly-buried body of a Scotchman was disinterred, stripped of its clothes, and thrown over the wall of the cemetery!

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ST. AUGUSTIN—ST. ANGEL—EL DESIERTO.

St. Augustin is another village of which I have already spoken; and St. Angel is one of nearly the same character, except that the views from its azotéas over the valley and city, are perhaps more beautiful.

The pleasantest ride, however, about the vale or its adjoining mountains, is to the ruins known as "*El Desierto*," or the Desert; the remains of an abandoned Carmelite convent, built among the rocky recesses of the western Sierra.

It is a fashionable ride of about seven leagues, and parties of gentlemen, and even ladies, make it a resort for agreeable *pic-nics*. The edifices were built between two hills, and are now going rapidly to decay, yet there are some remains of cells which still retain their coverings, while the main buildings are unroofed and almost choked with luxuriant trees and flowering shrubbery.

Thomas Gage, a *converted monk*, who visited Mexico about the end of the first century after the conquest, gave an account of this convent in 1677, when it was in its days of glory.

"The pleasantest place," says he, "of all that are about Mexico, is called La Soledad, and by others *El Desierto*—the Solitary, or Desert place. Were all wildernesses like it, to live in a wilderness would be better than to live in a city! This hath been a device of poor Fryers named *discalced*, or barefooted Carmelites, who, to make show of their apparent godliness, and that while they may be thought to live like Eremites, retired from the world, they may draw the world unto them, they have built there a stately cloister, which being upon a hill and among rocks makes it more to be admired. About the cloister they have fashioned out many holes and caves, in, under, and among the rocks, like Eremites' lodgings, with a room to lie in, and an oratory to pray in, with pictures and images, and rare devices for mortifications, as disciplines of wire, rods of iron, hair cloths, girdles with sharp wire points to girdle about their bare flesh, and many such like toys which hang about their oratories, to make people admire their mortified and holy lives.

"All the eremitical holes and caves (which are some ten in all) are within the bounds and compass of the cloister and among gardens and orchards full of fruits and flowers, which may take up two miles' compass; and here among the rocks are many springs of water, which, with the shade of the plantains and other trees, are most cool and pleasant to the Eremites; they have, also, the sweet smell of the rose and jasmine, which is a little flower, but the sweetest of all others; there is not any other flower to be found that is rare and exquisite in that country which is not in that wilderness, to delight the senses of those mortified Eremites!

"They are weekly changed from the cloister; and when the week is ended, others are sent, and they return unto their cloister; they carry with them their bottles of wine, sweetmeats, and other provision; as for fruits, *the trees about do drop them into their mouths.*

"It is wonderful to see the strange devices of fountains of water which are about the gardens; but much more wonderful to see the resort of coaches, and gallants, and ladies, and citizens from Mexico thither, to walk and make merry in those desert pleasures, and to see those hypocrites whom they look upon as living saints, and to think nothing too good for them to cherish them in their desert conflicts with Satan. No one goes to them but carries some sweetmeats or other dainty dish, to nourish and feed them withal; whose prayers they likewise earnestly solicit, leaving them great alms of money for their masses; and above all, offering to a picture in their church, called "OUR LADY OF CARMEL," treasures of diamonds, pearls, golden chains, and crowns, and gowns of cloth of gold and silver.

"*Before this picture did hang, in my time, twenty lamps of silver; the worst of them being worth a hundred pounds.*"

Of all these cool retreats—these quiet haunts for monkish mortification—the abodes, at once, of humility and pride—nothing now remains but heaps of ruins, marking the former cloisters and hermitages. But time has been unable to destroy the magnificent prospect that bursts upon the

traveller as he emerges from between the hills where the buildings are nestled. You stand nearly a thousand feet above the valley, and, in the pure and rarefied air of the mountains, the vision is almost unlimited over a world-like panorama of crag, lake, city, vale, and volcano. I have already described the view from the opposite point of the mountains, as you approach Mexico from the east, and I shall therefore not detain you with what could at best but amount to an amplified catalogue of picturesque features in the most charming landscape of the world.

JOURNAL OF A JOURNEY

IN THE

TIERRA CALIENTE:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF A VISIT TO

CUERNAVACA, THE RUINS OF XOCHICALCO, THE CAVERN OF CACAHUAWAMILPA, CUAUTLA DE AMILPAS,

AND SEVERAL

MEXICAN HACIENDAS OR PLANTATIONS.

17*th September*, 1842. This is still the rainy season in the Valley of Mexico, and the clouds which have hung around the valley for some weeks past, pouring out their daily showers, seem to forbid our departure upon an expedition which I have contemplated making before I leave Mexico; but as the period of my departure is rapidly approaching, I find it necessary to embrace the opportunity presented by the protection of a party of gentlemen who design visiting, during the next two weeks, some of the most interesting portions of *Tierra Caliente*, south of the Valley of Mexico. It strikes me, too, that as the mountains which surround this valley are the highest in Mexico, it is more probable that the stormy clouds, driven up by the north winds from the sea, gather and are attracted by these heights, and consequently expend themselves over the nearest plains;—the adjoining valleys which are lower than this, are likely, therefore, to be free from the continual deluge of water with which we have been visited for the last two months.

Our preparations have accordingly all been made to set out to-day, about four o'clock.

ST. AUGUSTIN DE LAS CUEVAS.

At three o'clock the court-yard of our houses presented the appearance of a cavalry barrack;—saddles, sabres, pistol-holsters, huge spurs, whips, baggage, horses, and servants. By four o'clock we had all *rendezvoused* at the dwelling of Mr. G——, in the Calle del Seminario. Our party is composed of seven, among whom are Mr. Black the American Consul, and Mr. Goury du Roslan, the Secretary of the French Legation; the rest are chiefly Scotch gentlemen, engaged in commerce in Mexico. Two mules have been hired and laden with a good store of *provant*—such as hams, corned-beef, portable soups, sausages, sardines, and wine, and these are put under the charge of an arriéro, who, with my servant, and two other servants of our companions, make up a company of eleven, all mustered.

Few things can be more complete for all weathers and all seasons, than the outfit of a Mexican horseman. He has everything that can contribute to the comfort or necessity of the passing hour, strapped to some part of his horse or his usual equipments.

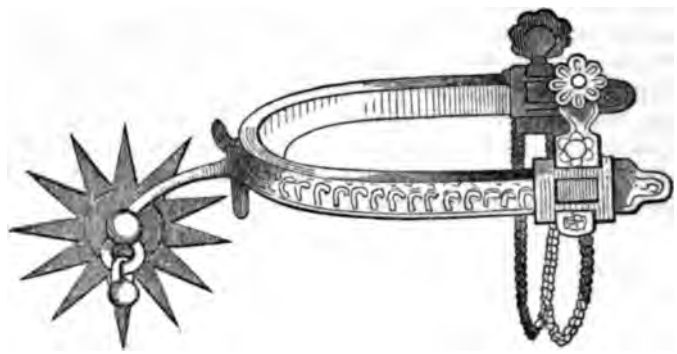
MEXICAN SERAPE

First of all, he has his broad-brimmed, steeple-crowned *Sombrero*, covered with oilskin; next, his short leathern jacket, fancifully embossed with plated nails, like the old buff-coats of the feudal freebooters; then, his leather trowsers with rows of buttons at the seam, preventing the chafing of the saddle, and his leggings to protect his feet and ankles; in front of him are his *armas de agua*, a large skin cut in two parts, the ends of which on one side are fastened to the saddle-bow, the other two being tied behind him, so that his legs are entirely protected from rain; before them, again, are strapped his pistols, while, passing beneath his left leg, rests his trusty *toledo*. From the peak, in front, hangs his *lasso*, a long running-noose with which he catches his horse in the morning; and behind him is strapped his *serape*, or blanket-cloak, with a slit in the middle, which he throws over his head when it rains or is cold, and protects him from the weather as by a perfect thatch.

MEXICAN HORSEMAN.

Thus mounted on his high-peaked Spanish saddle, with stiff wooden stirrups, over which are long ears of leather,—and his feet armed with the

huge Spanish spur, to which is attached a small ball of finely-tempered steel, that strikes against the long rowels at every tread of the man or beast, and rings like a fairy bell,



MEXICAN SPUR.

you have a complete picture of a Mexican horseman, equipped at every point and ready for the road. If he has to fight, he has his weapons; if to feed, he has his laden mule; if it rain, he dons his serape and armas de agua, and rides secure from storm and wind; and if he arrives at an Indian hut, after a long and toilsome journey, and no bed is ready to receive him, he spreads the skins on the earthen floor—his saddle is his pillow, and his blanket a counterpane. He is the compendium of a perfect travelling household.

In this guise were most of us equipped when we mustered in the great square—except, that for leathern jackets, we had substituted blue cloth, and had strapped our serapes on the pillions behind us.

All were punctual to the minute, and the arriéro, together with Gomez, and Antonio, the two other servants, were sent on to the *Garrita*, to pass our carga mules. Gomez was a stanch, wooden-faced old trooper, who had done good service in the troublous times in Mexico; Ramon, a Spaniard,—a thin, hatchet-visaged, boasting, slashing rogue,—who had fought through many a guerilla party of the Peninsular war; and Antonio, a sort of weazened supernumerary, with a game leg, a broken nose, a toothless upper gum, a devilish leering eye, and a pepper-and-salt cur as worthless as his master, who amused himself during the whole of our journey by running bulls, tearing sheep, worrying fowls, and taking twice as much exercise as was necessary.

A party in better spirits never set out. We had the prospect of relaxation, the sight of something novel, and the hope of propitious skies.

As the Cathedral clock struck four we put our animals in motion—*sed vana spes!* A cloud, which had been for some time threatening, opened its bosom. In a moment our serapes were on, the armas de agua tied round our waists, and the storm of wind and rain was upon us. We consoled ourselves by thinking it was only the baptism of the expedition.

At the city gate the guard of Custom-house officers wished to charge an export duty on our wine, but our passes from M. de Bocanegra and the Governor saved us, and we launched forth on the road to St. Augustin, with the shower increasing every minute. It is useless to say more of this dreary evening. For three hours the rain was incessant; and that the rain of a tropical storm, accompanied by wind and lightning. The water flowed from our blankets like spouts. The road over the plain was no longer a highway but a water-course, rushing and gurgling over every descent. The poor Indians returning from market paddled along, shrouded up in their *petates*. There was no conversation in the company. Every one was sulky, and felt a very strong disposition to return home and start fair with dry skies to-morrow; but it was decided to push on. Finally, one of our carga mules, with all the provant, tumbled over in the mud, and tried to kick himself clear from his load; the arriéro, however, was directly over him with his long whip, showering blows on head and haunches until he again set him in motion for the village.

It was quite dark when our cold, weary, and uncomfortable party entered St. Augustin, and knocked at the gate of Mr. M——'s country-house, where we were to stay for the night. We hoped to find everything duly prepared for our reception; and among our hopes, not the least was for a blazing fire to dry our bespattered garments. We came up to the door, one by one, silently and surlily. We were not only angry with the weather, but seemed to be mutually dissatisfied. After a deal of thumping, the door was slowly opened, and instead of the salutation of a brilliant blaze in the midst of the court-yard—one miserable, sickly tallow candle made its appearance! A colder, damper, or more uncomfortable crew never reunited after a storm; and we found, notwithstanding the usual protection of Mexican blankets, Mexican saddles, and armas de agua, that the rain had penetrated most of our equipments, and that we were decidedly damp, if not thoroughly drenched.

We entered the house after disposing of our accoutrements in a large hall, and found quite comfortable quarters and beds enough for all parties. A change of dress, a glass of capital *Farintosh*, (which was produced from the capacious leathern bottle of Douglas,) and a cut at the ham, with a postscript of cigars, set us all to rights again; and at eleven o'clock, as I write this memorandum, the party are singing the chorus of a song to Du Roslan's leading.

Sunday, 18*th*. I was asleep last night in five minutes, nor did I awake until aroused at 5 o'clock by the loud pattering of the rain against the shutters. Cold, gray, cheerlessly, the day broke; and as cold and cheerlessly did we assemble in the kitchen to take our chocolate. A council was held as to proceeding or waiting for better weather. I adhered to my theory, that the rain was confined to the Valley of Mexico; and that when we had passed the mountains in this day's journey, we would find it dry and pleasant travelling in the warmer and lower country. At any rate there was something consolatory in the *hope*. The horses were accordingly ordered, the damp dresses packed, our serapes wrung out, and the mules freighted for the day.

As the bells were ringing for mass, and the villagers hurrying through the streets to church, we sallied forth, every man trying to discover the symptom, even, of a break among the dreary brownish clouds that hung low from the mountain-tops to the valley.

As soon as the road leaves the town of St. Augustin, it strikes directly up the mountain, and runs over crags and ravines which in our country would startle the delicate nerves of a lady. Railroads and McAdam have spoiled us; but here, where the toilsome mule and the universal horse have converted men almost into centaurs and are the traditionary means of communication, no one thinks of improving the highways. But, of late years, diligences are getting into vogue between the chief cities of the Republic; and one, built in Troy, has been started on this very road. How it gets along over such ruts and drains, rocks and mountain-passes, it is difficult to imagine!

On we went, however, over hill and dale, the misty rain still drifting around us, and becoming finer and mistier as we rose on the mountain. The prospect was dreary enough, but in fine weather, these passes are said to present a series of beautiful landscapes. In front is then beheld the wild mountain scenery, while, to the north, the valley sinks gradually into the plain, mellowed by distance, and traversed by the lakes of Chalco and Tezcoco. Of the former of these we had a distinct view as the wind drifted the mist aside for a moment, when we had nearly attained the summit of the mountain. Here we passed a gang of laborers impressed for the army, and going, *tied in pairs*, under an escort of soldiers, to serve in the Capital. This was *recruiting!* Further on, we passed the body of a man lying on the side-path. He had evidently just died, and, perhaps, had been one of the party we had encountered. No one noticed him; his hat was spread over his face, and the rain was pelting on him.

We saw no habitations—no symptoms of cultivation; in fact, nothing except rocks and stunted herbage, and now and then, a muleteer, a miserable Indian plodding with a pannier of fruit to Mexico, or an Indian shepherd-boy, in his long *thatch-cloak* of water-flags, perched on a crag and watching his miserable cattle. We were then travelling among the clouds, near 9000 feet above the level of the sea.

INDIAN WITH PANNIER.

INDIAN SHEPHERD

After about four hours' journey in this desolation, the clouds suddenly broke to the southward, revealing the blue sky between masses of sullen vapor, and thus we reached our breakfasting house on the top of the mountain.

Imagine a mud-hole, (not a regular lake of mud, but a mass of that clayey, oozey, grayish substance, which sucks your feet at every step,) surrounded by eight huts, built of logs and reeds, stuck into the watery earth, and thatched with palm leaves. This was the stage breakfasting station, on the road from Mexico to Cuernavaca! We asked for "*the* house;" and a hut, a little more open than the rest, was pointed out. It was in two divisions, one being closed with reeds, and the other entirely exposed, along one side of which was spread a rough board supported on four sticks covered with a dirty cloth. It was *the principal hotel!*

There was no denying that prospects were most unpromising, but we were too hungry to wait longer for food. We asked for breakfast, but

the answer was the slow movement of the long forefinger from right to left, and a "No hai!"

"Any eggs?"

"No hai!"

"Any tortillas?"

"No hai."

"Any pulqué?"

"No hai."

"Any chilé?"

"No hai."

"Any water?"

"No hai!"

"What *have* you got then?" exclaimed we, in a chorus of desperation.

"*Nada!*"—nothing!

We tried to coax them, but without effect; and, at length, we ordered a mule to be unladen, and our own provisions to be unpacked. This produced a stir in the household, as soon as it became evident that there was to be *no high bid* for food.

In a moment a clapping of hands was heard in the adjoining room, and I found a couple of women at work, one grinding corn for tortillias, and the other patting them into shape for the griddle. There were two or three other girls in the apartment, and, taking a seat on a log, and offering a cigarrito to each of them, I began a chat with the prettiest, while the tortillas were cooking. A cigarrito, a-piece, exhausted, and with them, half-a-dozen jokes, I offered another to each of the damsels, and found them getting into better humor. At length, one arose, and after rummaging among the pots in a corner, produced a couple of eggs, which she said should be cooked for *me*. I thanked her, and by a little persuasion, induced her to add half a dozen more for the rest of the party. By the time that the eggs were boiled and the tortillas baked, I suggested that a dish of *mollé de guagelote* would be delicious with them, and felt sure that a set of such pretty lasses must know how to make it. "Quien sabe?" said one of them. "Was there not some left from this morning?" said another; and they both arose at once and looked again into the pots. The result was the discovery of a pan heaped with the desired turkey and chilé, and another quite as full of delicious frijoles. These were placed for five minutes over the coals, and the consequence was, that out of "*Nada*," I contrived to cater a breakfast that fed our company, servants, and arriéro, and which would have doubtless fed the mules also, if mules ever indulged in *chilé*. I never made a heartier meal, relishing it greatly in spite of the dirty table-cloth, the dirty women, the dirty village, and the fact that my respected tortilla-maker, while engaged in her laudable undertakings, had occasionally varied the occupation, by bestowing a *pat* on the cake, and another, with the same hand, on the most delicate portion of the leather-breeches of a brat who annoyed her by his cries and his antics. I shall long remember those girls, and

the witchcraft that lies in a little good-humor, and a paper of *cigarritos*. Let no one travel through a Spanish country without them.

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About one o'clock, we had again mounted, and riding along a level road which winds through the table-land of the mountain-top, we passed the CRUZ DEL MARQUEZ, a large stone cross set up not long after the conquest, to mark the boundary of the estate presented by Montezuma to Cortéz. At this spot the road is 9,500 feet above the level of the sea, and thence commences the descent of the southern mountain-slope toward the Vale of Cuernavaca. The pine forest in many places is open and arching like a park, and covers a wide sweep of meadow and valley. The air soon became milder, the sun warmer, the vegetation more varied, the fields less arid—and yet all was forest scenery, apparently untouched by the hand of man. In this respect it presents a marked difference from the mountains around the Valley of Mexico, where the denser population has destroyed the timber and cultivated the land.

This road is remarkable for being infested with robbers, but we fortunately met none. We were probably too strong for the ordinary gangs—some fifty shots from a company of foreigners, with double-barrel guns and revolving pistols, being dangerous welcome. At the village where we breakfasted, there was an ugly-looking band of scoundrels who hung around our party the whole time we remained there, watching our motions and examining our arms. I cannot conceive a set of figures better suited to the landscape that village presented, than these same *human fungi*, who had sprung up amid the surrounding physical desolation, and flourished in moral rottenness. Every man looked the rascal, with a beard of a month's growth, slouched hats, from under which they scowled their stealthy side-glances, sneaking, cat-like tread, and muffled cloaks or blankets, that but badly concealed the hilts of knives and *machetes*. None of these gentlemen, however, pursued or encountered us.

After a slow ride during the afternoon, we suddenly changed our climate. We had left the *tierras frias*, and *tierras templadas*, (the cold and temperate lands,) and had plunged at once, by a rapid descent of the mountain, into the *tierra caliente*, where the sun was raging with tropical fervor. The vegetation became entirely different and more luxuriant, and a break among the hills suddenly disclosed to us the Valley of Cuernavaca, bending to the east with its easy bow. The features of this valley are entirely different from those of the Valley of Mexico, for, although both possess many of the same elements of grandeur and sublimity, in the lofty and wide-sweeping mountains; yet there is a southern gentleness, and purple haziness about this, that soften the picture, and are wanting in the Vale of Mexico, in the high and rarefied atmosphere of which every object, even at the greatest distance, stands out with almost microscopic

distinctness. Besides this, the foliage is fuller, the forests thicker, the sky milder, and everything betokens the sway of a bland and tropical climate.

A bend of the road around a precipice, revealed to us the town of Cuernavaca, lying beyond the forest in the lap of the valley, while far in the east the mountains were lost in the plain, like a distant line of sea. Our company gathered together, on the announcement of the first sight of our port of destination for the night. It was decided, by the novices in Mexican travelling, that it could not be more distant than a couple of leagues at farthest; but long was the weary ride, descending and descending, with scarcely a perceptible decrease of space, before we reached the city.

In the course of this afternoon we passed through several Indian villages, and saw numbers of people at work in the fields by the road side. Two things struck me: first, the miserable hovels in which the Indians are lodged, in comparison with which a decent dog-kennel at home is a comfortable household; and second, the fact that this, although the Sabbath, was no day of repose to these ever-working, but poor and thriftless people. Many of the wretched creatures were stowed away *under a roof of thatch, stuck on the bare ground, with a hole left at one end to crawl in!*

What can be the benefit of a Republican form of government to masses of such a population? They have no ambition to improve their condition, or in so plenteous a country it would be improved; they are content to live and lie like the beasts of the field; they have no qualifications for self-government, and they can have no *hope*, when a life of such toil avails not to avoid such misery. Is it possible for such men to become Republicans? It appears to me that the life of a negro, under a good master, in our country, is far better than the beastly degradation of the Indian here. With us, he is at least a man; but in Mexico, even the instincts of his human nature are scarcely preserved.

It is true that these men are *free*, and have the unquestionable liberty, after raising their crop of fruits or vegetables, to trot with it fifty or sixty miles, *on foot*, to market, where the produce of their toil is, in a few hours, spent, either at the gambling table or the pulqué shop. After this they have the liberty, as soon as they get sober, to trot back again to their kennels in the mountains, if they are not previously *lassoed* by some recruiting sergeant, and forced to "volunteer" in the army. Yet what is the worth of such purposeless liberty or the worth of such purposeless life? There is not a single ingredient of a noble-spirited and highminded *mountain peasantry* in them. Mixed in their races, they have been enslaved and degraded by the conquest; ground into abject servility during the Colonial government; corrupted in spirit by the superstitious rites of an ignorant priesthood; and now, without hope, without education, without other interest in their welfare, than that of some good-hearted

village curate, they drag out a miserable existence of beastiality and crime. Shall such men be expected to govern themselves?

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It was long after sunset when we descended the last steep, and passed a neat little village, where the people were sitting in front of their low-roofed houses, from every one of which issued the tinkle of guitars. The bright sky reflected a long twilight, and it was just becoming dark when we trotted into Cuernavaca, after a ride of fourteen leagues.

Our companions had already reached the inn, and as we dashed into the court-yard, we found them *à tort et à travers* with the landlord about rooms. We had seen a flaming advertisement of this tavern and its comforts in the papers of the Capital, and counted largely on splendid apartments and savory supper after our tiresome ride and pic-nic breakfast. But, as at the "diligence hotel" in the morning—everything went to the tune of "*No hai!*" No hai beds, rooms, meats, soups, supper—nada! They had nothing! We ended by securing two rooms, and I set out to examine them, as well as my legs (stiff from being all day in the hard Mexican stirrups) would let me. The first room I entered was covered with water from the heavy rains. The second adjoined the first; and, although the walls were damp, the floor was dry; but there was no window or opening except the door!

We had secured the room, and of course wanted *beds;* because, room and bed, and bureau, and wash-stand, and towels, and soap, are not all synonymous here as in other civilized countries. Four of our travellers had fortunately brought cots with them; but I had trusted to my two blankets and my old habits of foraging. At length the master managed to find a bed for two more of us, and a cot for me, and thus the night was provided for. We had resolved not to go without supper, and my talents in that branch of our adventures having been proved in the morning, I was dispatched to the kitchen. I will not disclose the history of my negotiations on this occasion, but suffice it to say that in an hour's time we had a soup; a fragment of stewed mutton; a plate of Lima beans; a famous dish of turkey and peppers; and the table was set off by an enormous head of lettuce in the centre, garnished with outposts of oranges on either side, while two enormous pine-apples reared their prickly leaves in front and rear.

An hour afterward we had all retired to our windowless room, and after piling our baggage against the door to keep out the robbers, I wrapped myself in my blanket, on the bare, pillowless, sacking-bottom, and was soon asleep.

Monday, 19th September. The morning was exceedingly fine, the sun was out brightly, and there were no symptoms of the rain that

had fallen during the night, except in the freshness it had imparted to the luxuriant vegetation of the valley.

Before breakfast I sallied forth for a walk over the town. Cuernavaca lies on a tongue of land jutting out into the lap of the valley. On its western side, a narrow glen has been scooped out by the water which descends from the mountains, and its sides are thickly covered with the richest verdure. To the east, the city again slopes rapidly, and then as rapidly rises. I walked down this valley street past the church built by Cortéz, (an old picturesque edifice, filled with nooks and corners,) where they were chanting a morning mass. In the yard of the Palace, or *Casa Municipal*, at the end of the street, a body of dismounted cavalry soldiers was going through the sword exercise. From this I went to the Plaza in front of it, at present nearly covered with a large wooden amphitheatre, that had been devoted to bull fights during the recent national holydays. Around the edges of this edifice, the Indians and small farmers spread out their mats, covered with fine fruits and vegetables of the *tierra caliente*. I passed up and down a number of the steep and narrow streets, bordered with ranges of one-story houses, open and cool, and fronted usually with balconies and porches screening them from the scorching sun. The softer and gentler appearance of the people, as compared with those of the Valley of Mexico, struck me forcibly. The whole has a Neapolitan air. The gardens are numerous and full of flowers. By the street sides, small canals continually pour along the cool and clear waters from the mountains.

At nine o'clock I returned to breakfast, and found it rather better than our last night's supper. While this meal was preparing, I strolled out into the garden back of the hotel.

The house once belonged to a convent, and was occupied by monks; but many years since it was purchased by a certain Joseph Laborde, who played a bold part in the mine-gambling which once agitated the Mexicans with its speculative excitement.

In 1743, Laborde came, as a poor youth, to Mexico, and by a fortunate venture in the mine of the Cañada del Real de Tapujahua, he gained immense wealth. After building a church in Tasco which cost him near half a million, he was suddenly reduced to the greatest misery, both by unlucky speculations, and the failure of mines from which he had drawn an annual revenue of between two and three hundred thousand marks. The Archbishop, however, permitted him to dispose of a golden *soleil*, enriched with diamonds, which, in his palmy days, he had presented to his church at Tasco; and with the produce of the sale, which amounted to nigh one hundred thousand dollars, he returned once more to Zacatecas. This district was at that period nearly abandoned as a mining country, and produced annually but fifty thousand marks of silver. But Laborde immediately undertook the celebrated mine of Quebradilla, and in working it, lost again, nearly all his capital. Yet was he not to be deterred.

With the scanty remains of his wealth, he persevered in his labors; struck on the *veta grande*, or great vein of La Esperanza, and thereby, a second time, replenished his coffers. From that period, the produce of the mines of Zacatecas rose to near five hundred thousand marks a year, and Laborde, at his death, left three millions of livres. In the meantime, however, he had forced his only daughter into a convent, in order that he might bequeath his immense property unembarrassed to his son; who, in turn, infected like his father with religious bigotry, voluntarily embraced the monastic life, and ended the family's career of avarice and ambition.

During his days of prosperity, Laborde had owned the property on which we are now staying, and embellished it with every adornment that could bring out the beauties of surrounding nature. The dwelling is said to have been magnificent before it was destroyed during the Revolution, but nothing remains now of all the splendor with which the speculator enriched it, except the traces of its beautiful garden. This is situated on the western slope bending toward the glen, and contains near eight acres in its two divisions. These he covered with a succession of gradually descending terraces, filled with the rarest natural and exotic flowers. In the midst of these gardens is still a tank for water-fowl, and over the high western wall rises a mirador or *bellevue*, from which the eye ranges north, south, and west, to the mountains over the plain, which is cut in its centre by the tangled dell.

The northern division of this garden is reached by a flight of steps from the first, and incloses a luxuriant grove of forest trees, broad-leaved plantains, and a few solitary palms waving over all their fan-like branches. In these dense and delicious shades through which the sun, at noon, can scarcely penetrate, a large basin spreads out into a mimic lake. A flight of fifteen steps descend to it from the bank, and were once filled with jars of flowers. In the centre of this sheet two small gardens are still planted, and the flowers bending over their sides and growing to their very edge, seem floating on the waters. At the extreme end of the grounds, a deep summer-house extends nearly the whole width of the field on arches, and its walls are painted in fresco to resemble a beautiful garden filled with flowers and birds of the rarest plumage. Looking at this from the south end of the little lake, the deception is perfect, and you seem beholding the double of the actual prospect, repeated by some witchery of art.

I would gladly have spent the day in this garden, but we had arranged our journey so as to devote a portion of this morning to visit the adjacent hacienda of Temisco, a sugar plantation, owned by the Del Barrios, of Mexico. Accordingly, after breakfast we mounted, and passing down the steep descents to the east, we struck off into the fields in a southwardly direction.

The beautiful suburbs of Cuernavaca are chiefly inhabited by Indians, whose houses are built along the narrow lanes; and in a country where it is a comfort to be all day long in the open air under the shade of trees,

and where you require no covering except to shelter you in sleep and showers, you may readily imagine that the dwellings of the people are exceedingly slight. A few canes stuck on end, and a thatch of cane, complete them.

But the broad-leaved plantain, the thready pride of China, the feathery palm, bending over them, and matted together by lacing vines and creeping plants covered with blossoms—these form the real dwellings. The whole, in fact, would look like a picture from Paul and Virginia—but for the figures! Unkempt men, indolent and lounging; begrimed women, surrounded by a set of naked little imps as begrimed as they; and all crawling or rolling over the filth of their earthen floors, or on dirty hides stretched over sticks for a bed. A handful of corn, a bunch of plantains, or a pan of beans picked from the nearest bushes, is their daily food; and here they burrow, like so many animals, from youth to manhood, from manhood to the grave.

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After leaving the city, our road lay for some distance along the high table-land, and at length struck into the glen which passes from the west of Cuernavaca, where, for the first time in Mexico, I actually lost the high-road. Imagine the channel of a mountain-stream down the side of an Alleghany mountain, with its stones chafed out of all order, and many of them worn into deep clefts by the continual tread of mules following each other, over one path, for centuries. This was the main turnpike of the country to the port of Acapulco, and several of our party managed to continue on horseback while descending the ravine; but out of respect both for myself and the animal I bestrode, I dismounted, and climbed over the rocks and gullies to the bottom of the glen, where we crossed a swift stream on a bridge. Ascending from this to the ridge on the opposite side, in rather a scrambling manner, we entered the domain of the hacienda* of Temisco, the buildings of which we shortly reached after passing through an Indian village, where most of the laborers on the estate reside.

This is one of the oldest establishments of note in the Republic, and passed, not many years since, into the hands of the present owners for the sum of $300,000. The houses (consisting of the main dwelling, a large chapel, and all the requisite out-buildings for grinding the cane and refining the sugar,) were erected shortly after the conquest, and their walls bear yet the marks of the bullets with which the refractory owner was assailed during one of the numerous revolts in Mexico. He stood out stoutly against the enemy, and mustering his faithful Indians within the walls of his court-yard, repulsed the insurgents.

* "Hacienda," is the name given to all estates or plantations in contradistinction to "Rancho," a farm.

INDIAN HUT IN THE TIERRA CALIENTE.

The estate spreads over a tract of eleven leagues in length by three in breadth. It employs about two hundred and fifty laborers, at two and a half and three reals per day, who produce about fifty thousand loaves of sugar, of from twenty-two to twenty-four pounds, per annum. It is calculated that the molasses pays all the expenses of the establishment, which amount to near thirty thousand dollars. At the store of the hacienda, (belonging to the proprietor of the estate,) almost the whole of this sum is received back from the Indians, who, I perceived, purchased even their bread. In addition to the revenue from the sugar crop, about eight thousand head of cattle feed on the premises, half of which are the property of its owner, the other half being strays from adjoining haciendas.

We were received by Don Rafael, one of the brothers del Barrio, whom we unexpectedly met on the estate. He conducted us into a long monastic-looking hall, nearly bare of furniture, yet bearing traces of taste and refinement, in a well-selected library and valuable piano in one corner, while a hammock, suspended from the unplastered rafters, swung across the airy apartment. Here we were most hospitably entertained, and enjoyed a pleasant chat with the owner, in French, Spanish, English and German, all of which languages the worthy gentleman speaks,—having not only travelled in, but dwelt long and *observingly* in every country of Europe. It was strange, in these wild portions of Mexico, in the midst of Indians, to drop thus suddenly and unexpectedly by the side of a well-bred man, dressed in his simple costume of a plain country farmer, who could converse with you in most of the modern tongues, upon all subjects—from the collections of the Pitti Palace and the Vatican, to the breed and education of a game cock!

As we looked over the fields of cane, waving their long, delicate green leaves, in the mid-day sunshine to the south, he pointed out to us the site of an Indian village, at the distance of three leagues, *the inhabitants of which are almost in their native state.* He told us, *that they do not permit the visits of white people; and that, numbering more than three thousand, they come out in delegations to work at the haciendas, being governed at home by their own magistrates, administering their own laws, and employing a Catholic priest, once a year, to shrive them of their sins.* The money they receive in payment of wages, at the haciendas, is taken home and buried; and as they produce the cotton and skins for their dress, and the corn and beans for their food, they purchase nothing at the stores. They form a good and harmless community of people, rarely committing a depredation upon the neighboring farmers, and only occasionally *lassoing* a cow or a bull, which they say they "do not *steal*, but *take* for food." If they are chased on such occasions, so great is their speed of foot, they are rarely caught even by the swiftest horses; and if their settlement is ever entered by a *white, the transgressor is immediately seized, put under guard in a large hut, and he and his animal are fed and carefully attended to until the follow-*

ng day, when he is dispatched from the village under an escort of Indians, who watch him until far beyond the limits of the primitive settlement.

Du Roslan and myself felt a strong desire (notwithstanding the inhibition,) to visit this original community, as one of the most interesting objects of our journey; but the rest of our party objecting, we were forced to submit to the law of majorities in our wandering tribe.

I observed, that on this hacienda the proprietors have introduced all the improvements in the art of making sugar, and obtained their horizontal rollers and boiling-pans from New-York. How they reached their places over the wretched roads, must ever remain a riddle to others but Mexican teamsters; and yet, after all the immense outlay of capital, in the purchase and improvement of this property, the proprietor complains bitterly, this year, of the difficulty of selling its produce, and the general depression of the times. With roads to transport his crop to market, and with ideas *beyond the back of a mule as the only means of transportation*, he would not be forced to complain long of stagnant trade and trifling profits. Peace, internal improvement, and native enterprise, unmolested by fiscal legislation, are what Mexico requires; and, until she obtains them, the planter may vainly expend his fortune in mechanical improvements.

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We reached Cuernavaca about 3 o'clock, meeting on the way a number of muleteers, and Indians with their wives, returning from market. A gang of thieves, sent under a guard to the town prison, also passed us on the road.

We entered the city, through the delightful suburb of groves. The families of many of the better classes of the inhabitants were sitting under the shade of their porches, and it was impossible to avoid remarking the delicate beauty of the females.

Indolence is said to be the general characteristic of Cuernavaca; and, as in all fine climates, it is fatal to enterprise and industry. The temperature is too high for these virtues. Man wants but shade, shelter, and a gratified appetite, and there is no inducement to make the interior of dwellings either beautiful or attractive. Working in the open air fatigues—reading, within, makes them drowsy. They rise early, because it is too warm to lie in bed; they go to mass, for exercise in the cool and balmy morning air; they go to sleep after their meals, because it is too warm to walk about; and they go to vespers, to pass the time until the hour arrives for another meal, as preparatory to another nap! And thus, between sleep, piety, and victuals, life passes aimlessly enough, in this region of eternal summer.

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We lounged for an hour or two in Laborde's beautiful garden, watching the sunset over the western glen, and found it difficult to leave even for the promise of a dinner. While we had been on our morning visit to the hacienda, the diligence arrived from Mexico, and the hungry passengers, who had travelled since three o'clock almost without food, made a deep inroad in the larder. It required some energy to repair this havoc, and as our dinner had been ordered at six o'clock, I took occasion to pay my respects to the cook-maid. With the aid of a little cash and persuasion, I managed to preserve our own stores untouched until we penetrate farther into the country, where, in all likelihood, we will need them more.

After dinner, we took a walk by moonlight through the town. The night was as cloudless and serene, as one of our summer evenings by the sea-shore.

Antonio, the broken-nosed hero, and owner of the cur, proposed that we should go to see a *fandango*, at the house of one of the burghers, who was his friend. He led the way, through several streets, to a neat dwelling in the midst of a garden, where we found a row of elderly ladies strung on high-backed chairs against the wall, while a dozen young and pretty ones (by the light of a couple of starved tallow candles,) received the compliments of as many of the village beaux. Two or three musicians were seated in a corner strumming their *bandalones*, and going through a half hour of preparatory tuning, while the company gathered. At length, when all had assembled, the schoolmaster—a veteran and a bachelor, the briskest and busiest man of the party—constituted himself master of ceremonies for the evening, and insisted on our joining in a *contra dance*, got up expressly for the strangers. Du Roslan and myself joined the dance, on my principle of "taking people as they are, and doing as they do," besides that I think it always in the worst taste to leave men, no matter how humble or poor they may be, under the impression that you have visited them as curiosities. After footing it through, we handed the servants a couple of dollars to bring in refreshments of "Perfect-love" and "Noyau" for the ladies, and something more likely to be relished by the gentlemen. This we understood was not contrary to the rules of "good society;"—so they sipped and became livelier. A couple took the floor—the lady with *castanets*, and the man chanting an air to the guitar. Another pair followed their example, while the remainder formed a cotillon, to the twang of the rest of the instruments. The Cuernavacans seemed wide awake, for once at least, and we stole off quietly at midnight, in the midst of an uproar of music and merriment.

20th September. At four o'clock, day was just breaking and the moon still shining, when we passed through the suburbs of Cuernavaca. As we reached the highlands of the plateau, where the barranca breaks precipitously, the sun rose. There had been no rain during the night; the sky was perfectly clear, and in the distance lay the mountains of the

southern Sierra, with the morning mists resting like lakes among their folds.

Passing over the declivitous road we had traversed yesterday, we soon struck off to the right, near the hacienda of Temisco, and after crossing a deep ravine, rose to a still higher plateau, where we enjoyed a beautiful view of this splendid estate, with its white walls and chapel tower, buried in the middle of bright green cane-fields, waving with the fresh breeze in the early light.

From this eminence the guide (who was a half-breed Indian and Negro,) pointed out to me a small mountain, at the extremity of the plain in front, on which was situated the Pyramid of Xochicalco—the subject of our day's explorations. The *cerro* appears to rise directly out of the levels between two mountains, and the plain continuing to its very foot, might seemingly be traversed in half an hour. Accordingly, I expressed this opinion to the guide, and put my horse directly in motion for it; but the half-breed turned off to the right. I remonstrated, as the whole plateau appeared to be a perfect prairie, smooth and easily crossed; yet he insisted that in the straight forward direction, and, indeed, in all directions, it was cut by one of those vast barrancas, which, worn by the attrition of water for ages, break on you unexpectedly in the most level fields, forcing you frequently to tread back your path or to go miles around for a suitable crossing. The space in a direct line over these gullies may be no more than fifty yards before you strike the same level on the opposite bank—and yet to reach it, you are compelled to descend hundreds of feet and ascend again, among rocks and herbage for the distance of a mile. Such was the account of the barrancas, given by our guide, except that he declared the one in front of us to be at present *entirely impassable*. I submitted, therefore, to his advice, and turning off with him to the right, we trotted away at the head of our party, and soon lost sight of our lagging friends.

In a quarter of an hour we reached one of the barrancas of which he had spoken, and it fully justified his description:—a wide, yawning gulf in the midst of the plain, with precipitous sides tangled with rocks and shrubbery.

Although the path was scarcely broad enough for the horse's feet,—with a steep towering on the right, and a precipice of a hundred yards plunging down immediately on his left,—this bold rider never quitted his animal, but pushed right onward. I confess that I paused before I followed.

Two travellers, who passed us half an hour before, had already descended, and were thridding their way on the other side of the glen among the rocks. Instead, however, of taking the side of the opposite steep in a right line with the descent, as they ought to have done, they had followed the downward course of the stream in seeking for an easier rise, and they were forced to halt before a pile of impassable rocks, from which they shouted to our guide for directions.

When I again caught a glimpse of the half-breed, his head was rising and sinking with the motion of his horse, a hundred feet below me, as he slid along the shelving precipices of the barranca. Yet there was no alternative but to follow him; and as my horse was an old roadster in the *tierra caliente*, I resolved not to be outdone, and so, giving him his own time and control of the bridle, I trusted to his sagacity, and put him in the path. Nor had I occasion to regret my confidence in the beast; he did his work bravely, feeling his path, leaning against the upper sides of the dangerous passes, and clambering along with the tenacity of a fly and the activity of a cat. But when we were within fifty feet of the bottom of the ravine, a sharp turn to the right disclosed to me an almost headlong wall of rock for the remaining distance, into which steps had been cut that seemed scarcely passable on foot. I looked about me, and found there was room to dismount. Although I had great confidence in the horse, I confess to more in my own feet; and thus scrambling on ahead, at the length of my *lasso*, I led the animal to the bottom of the dell, through which ran a broad and rapid stream swollen by the recent rains. Here I found the guide waiting for me. We plunged in at once, and partly swimming the horses and partly scrambling over the huge stones that formed the bed of the torrent, we attained the western bank in safety.

Fairly past one difficulty, another confronted us in the ascent of the opposite side, which seemed steeper and more craggy than the other. Determined to try my horse's mettle, I now continued on his back, and prepared him for what he had to expect by leaping a stone-wall at the foot of the declivity. He took at once nimbly to the crags, sprang after the guide from rock to rock and ledge to ledge, almost at a run; neither laid his ears to his neck for a moment, nor faltered for whip, spur, or word of encouragement; and, in half the time occupied in the descent, placed me on the top of the plateau.

But our companions were missing. From our elevated position, we commanded an uninterrupted view over the levels of the opposite prairie, yet they were neither on it, nor winding down the sides of the glen. Mr. Black soon made his appearance, and followed us up the cliffs; but he was not able to account for the rest of the party. In half an hour, however, they appeared near a mile up the barranca fording the river; and as it was evident that they were in the right direction and saw us, we pushed on. Descending another fold of the ravines, and again crossing an arm of the same stream, and zig-zagging another hill to its summit, we found ourselves at last on the table-land without the interruption of more barrancas.

Here we were rejoined by some of the party, who reported one of the mules to be broken down. The other, however, soon reached us, and it was sent back unladen, for the carga of the useless beast that was detained at the foot of the last declivity.

In half an hour we were again in motion, after a fruitless effort to shoot a young buck we had started in a neighboring corn-field. The sun was now intensely hot, and from its influence and the exercise of the morning, I was drenched with perspiration, nor was it disagreeable to find the pores of the skin thus relieved, after a residence of eight months in the Valley of Mexico, where the sensation is scarcely known.

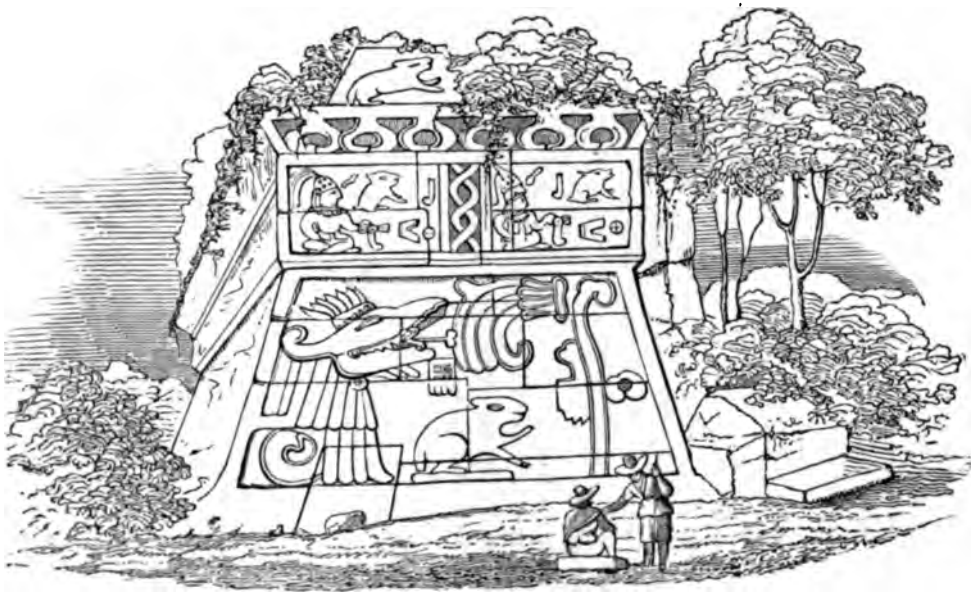
I put up my umbrella to screen myself as much as possible from the direct rays, but the heat was reflected as scorchingly from the naked plain and shrubless hills. Nevertheless, wearied by the fatigue of six hours in the saddle without food, I soon fell into a doze, which lasted until we entered the bare gorge between the hills through which commences the ascent to the ruined pyramid.

Here, among some scanty bushes which afforded shade and shelter, we dismounted to breakfast; but, unluckily, water had been entirely forgotten by our servants; there was not a drop in the gourds or canteens. Our pic-nic feast of sardines, ham, sausage, and corned-beef, consequently but added to a parching thirst which there was no hope of allaying but by slow draughts of claret and sherry that had been exposed for hours to a blazing sun on the backs of mules. Nor was this all. Scarcely had we seated ourselves, when clouds of black-flies and mosquitos came down from their nests among the ruins, and I write this memorial of them with hands inflamed by their inexorable stings.

In a bad humor, as you may naturally suppose, for antiquarian researches, I nevertheless mounted my horse as soon as breakfast was over, and ascended the hill with Pedro, while my companions, who had less anxiety about such matters, laid down under an awning of serapes stretched from tree to tree, to finish the nap that had been interrupted at half-past three in the morning.

THE RUINS OF THE PYRAMID OF XOCHICALCO.

At the distance of six leagues from the city of Cuernavaca lies a *cerro*, three hundred feet in height, which, with the ruins that crown it, is known by the name of Xochicalco, or "the Hill of Flowers." The base of this eminence is surrounded by the very distinct remains of a deep and wide ditch; its summit is attained by five spiral terraces; the walls that support them are built of stone, joined by cement, and are still quite perfect; and, at regular distances, as if to buttress these terraces, there are remains of bulwarks shaped like the bastions of a fortification. The summit of the hill is a wide esplanade, on the eastern side of which are still perceptible three truncated cones, resembling the *tumuli* found among many similar ruins in Mexico. On the other sides there are also large



NORTHWEST CORNER OF XOCHICALCO.

RUINS OF XOCHICALCO.

heaps of loose stones of irregular shape, which seem to have formed portions of similar mounds or *tumuli*, or, perhaps, parts of fortifications in connection with the wall that is alleged by the old writers to have surrounded the base of the pyramid, but of which I could discern no traces.

The stones forming parts of the conical remains, have evidently been shaped by the hand of art, and are often found covered with an exterior coat of mortar, specimens of which I took away with me as sharp and perfect as the day it was laid on centuries ago.

Near the base of the last terrace, on which the pyramid rises, the esplanade is covered with trees and tangled vines, but the body of the platform is cultivated as a corn-field. We found the Indian owner at work in it, and were supplied by him with the long-desired comfort of a gourd of water. He pointed out to us the way to the summit of the terrace through the thick brambles; and rearing our horses up the crumbling stones of the wall, we stood before the ruins of this interesting pyramid, the remains of which, left by the neighboring planters after they had borne away enough to build the walls of their haciendas, now lie buried in a grove of palmettos, bananas, and forest-trees, apparently the growth of many hundred years.

Indeed, this pyramid seems to have been (like the Forum and Colliseum at Rome,) the quarry for all the builders of the vicinity; and Alzate, who visited it as far back as 1777, relates, that *not more than twenty years before, the five terraces of which it consisted, were still perfect;* and that on the eastern side of the upper platform there had been a magnificent throne carved from porphyry, and covered with hieroglyphics of the most graceful sculpture. Soon after this period, however, the work of destruction was begun by a certain Estrada, and it is not more than a couple of years since one of the wealthiest planters of the neighborhood ended the line of spoilers by carrying off enormous loads of the squared and sculptured materials, to build a tank in a barranca to bathe his cattle! All that now remains of the five stories, terraces, or bodies of the pyramid, are portions *of the first*, the whole of which is of dressed porphyrytic rock, covered with singular figures and hieroglyphics executed in a skilful manner. The opposite plate presents a general view of the ruins as seen from the westward.

The basement is a rectangular building, and its dimensions on the northern front, measured above the plinth, are sixty-four feet in length, by fifty-eight in depth on the western front. The height between the plinth and frieze is nearly ten feet; the breadth of the frieze is three feet and a half, and of the cornice one foot and five inches. I placed my compass on the wall, and found the lines of the edifice to correspond exactly with the cardinal points.

The western front is quite clear of bushes and fallen stones, and we had an opportunity to examine minutely the sculpture of the northwestern corner, which is very accurately delineated by Nebel* in the second engraving.

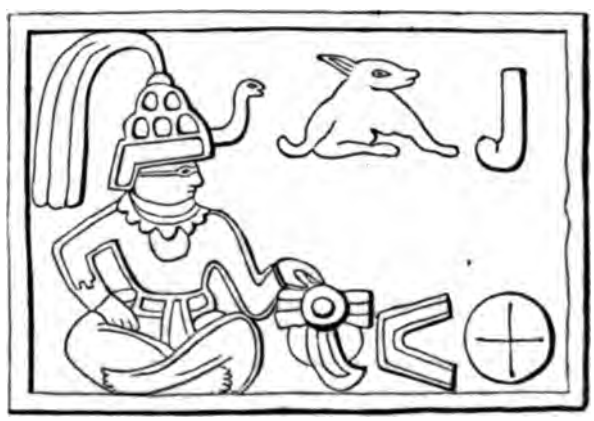
* Viaje pintoresco y Arqueologico á la Republica de Mexico.

In the left-hand corner of this sculpture will be perceived the head of a monstrous beast, whose bearded and open jaws are armed with sharp teeth, from between which protrudes a forked tongue. In front of this is a crook or staff, terminated by a plume of feathers, similar to that of the head-dress of the figures that will be subsequently described. Beneath the mouth of the monster is a square, resembling a hieroglyph, or perhaps a Chinese letter; and below this is a rabbit, a figure which will be noticed again on the corner stone that formed part of the base of the second story, as well as on the frieze of the first.

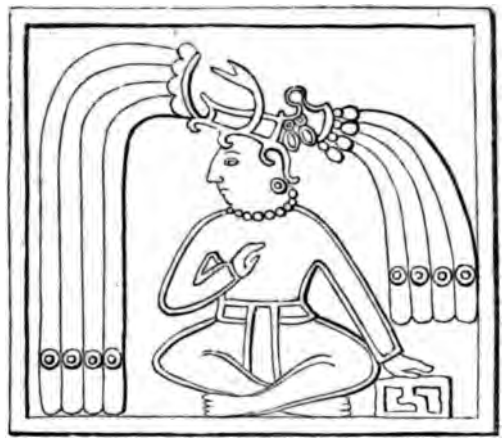
Nothing of this pyramid remains so uninjured as the northern front; and this, with the exception of parts of the frieze and cornice, is still entire. I present, in the plate marked A, a copy of the drawing made of it by Alzate at the period of his visit in 1777.

It will be perceived, that although the figures at the corners somewhat resemble those already described on the western front, yet the lines proceeding from the mouths of the monsters' heads fall in a curve; and it was doubtless from these that the story repeated by Humboldt originated, that "at the Pyramid of Xochicalco there were representations of *crocodiles* spouting water." They certainly are not crocodiles, but more probably, some fabulous monsters fashioned from the imaginations of the unknown builders, or compounded, perhaps, of various symbols by which they represented their deities.

On the frieze are constantly repeated the figures represented by Nebel in the following drawings:



NORTH END OF THE PYRAMID OF XOCHICALCO.



The figures in both of these bassi-relievi are seated *cross-legged;* plumes depend from a cap of the one, and from an odd head-dress of the other; and the left hand of the figure in the second drawing rests upon an ornament or symbol. In the figure of the first drawing the right hand is placed on the thigh; the left holds a sort of crooked dagger, and a curious bandage, not unlike *a pair of spectacles*, is over the eyes. Four symbols cover the rest of the square—a rabbit, a figure precisely like the letter J, another like the letter V, *on its side*, and an oval in which there is a cross. These relievos, as I before observed, run round the whole of the remaining frieze, while the cornice above it is sculptured with the tasteful ovals represented in the drawing of the northwestern angle.

I could not find any remains of color on the sculpture, which is generally between three and four inches deep. I have represented the outlines of the stones of which the edifice is composed *in the design of the northwestern angle*. They are laid upon each other without cement, and kept in place by their weight alone; and as the sculpture of a figure is seen to run frequently over several of them, there can be no doubt that the bassi-relievi were cut *after* the pyramid had been erected.

Some idea may be formed of the immense labor with wnich this building was constructed, from measurements I made of several of the masses of porphyry that compose it. The whole building occupies a space of three thousand seven hundred and twelve square feet—the middle stone in the first story at the north end, is seven feet eleven inches long, and two feet nine inches broad; the stone at the northeast corner on the second story, represented in the plate as bearing the figure of a rabbit, is five feet two inches long, and two feet six inches broad; and the stone at

the base of the southwest corner is two feet seven inches high, five feet long, and four feet seven inches broad.

When it is recollected that these materials were not found in the neighborhood, but were brought from a great distance, and borne up a hill, (more than three hundred feet high,) we cannot fail to be struck with the industry, toil and ingenuity of the builders, especially as the use of beasts of burden was at that time unknown in Mexico. Nor was this edifice on the summit the only portion of the architect's labor. Huge rocks were brought to form the walls supporting the terraces that surrounded the hill a league in circumference, and the whole of that immense mass *was cased in stone*. Beyond these terraces again, there was still another immense task in the ditch, of even greater extent, which had to be dug and regularly embanked! When you combine all these difficulties and all their labors, I think you will agree with me, that there are but few works, not of *essential utility*, undertaken in the present age by civilized nations, that do not sink into insignificance when contrasted with the hill of Xochicalco, from whose summit towered its lofty pyramid of sculptured porphyry.

There appears to be no doubt that a flight of steps rose on the western front from the commencement of the terrace, and terminated before three portals, the remains of which Nebel alleges he discovered; but since his visit, the edifice has been so much injured, and the vegetation has sprung up so vigorously, that I was unable to perceive any indications of the apertures. It is probable that these led to the interior of the Temple, whence there was a communication with the subterranean vaults that have been explored within a few years by persons acting under orders of the Government. I endeavored to examine these underground apartments as soon as I found the opening to them, at the foot of the first terrace on the northern side of the hill; but the guide professed ignorance of the interior, and the Indian he had engaged to pilot me failed in attending. Indeed, such is the superstition of these simple-minded people, that you find it difficult to investigate anything in which their services are required, among the relics of their ancient race. They believe that the mounds and caverns are haunted by the spirits of their ancestors—that they were places of sepulture or holiness—and few have the hardihood to assist in revealing their secrets.

In examining various works on the subject of these ruins, the best notice I have found of them is the account of a visit of certain gentlemen in March, 1835, by order of the Supreme Government.* In making a complete examination, both of the pyramid and the hill, this party explored the caverns and vaults.

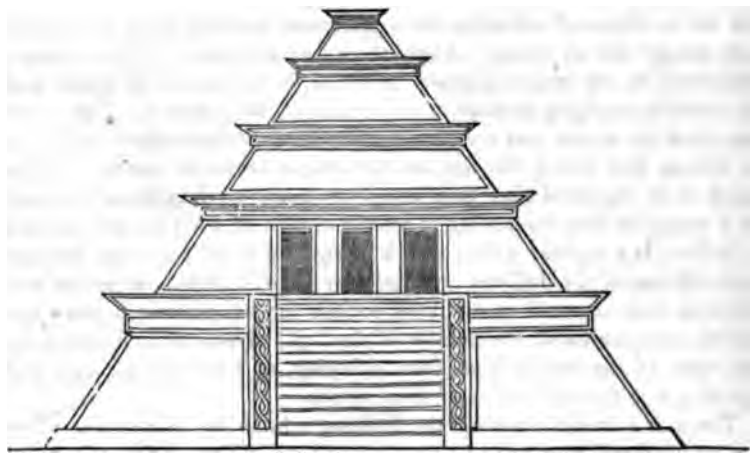
After describing their course through various dark and narrow passages, the walls of which were covered with a hard and varnished gray cement, that preserved its lustre in a remarkable degree, they came to

* Published in the Revista Mejicana of 1835.

two enormous pillars, or rather two masses, cleft from the rock of which the hill is composed, affording three entrances, between them, to a saloon near ninety feet in extent. Above them was a cupola of regular shape, supported by cut stones disposed in *circles*, in the middle of which was an aperture reaching perhaps to the summit of the pyramid. The writer describes the stones that compose the cupola as "diminishing gradually in size as they rise to the top, and forming a beautiful mosaic." It is much to be regretted that these explorers made no drawing of the spot, as it would be most interesting to see the outline of what we are thus led to believe is a regular arch; and it is equally to be regretted, that the superstitions of the Indians and the fear of wild beasts, scorpions and serpents, that are said to fill these sombre crypts, prevent a more extended examination of the interior of the hill. I was alone deterred by the haste of my companions, from delaying, at least another day, and devoting it to the exploration of these vaults.

There is a tradition among the Indians, related by Alzate, that when the pyramid still numbered its five stories, there was on, or near, the hill of Xochicalco, an enormous stone or group, representing a man whose entrails an eagle was tearing; but of this there are now no vestiges. Nebel states, that there was undoubtedly a communication from the interior of the temple to the vaults below; and, founding his belief on Indian tradition and on a discovery he made at the top of the first terrace, he alleges, that an aperture extended from the summit of the pyramid to the crypt we have described, and immediately beneath it was placed an altar, on which the sun's rays fell when that luminary became vertical. What his authorities were it is difficult to determine; but I imagine the tale to be quite as fanciful as many other portions of his beautiful work.

This gentleman has given a drawing of what he terms the "Restoration of the Pyramid of Xochicalco," as it is supposed to have appeared when its terraces were all complete; and although I do not believe he has sufficient authority for *the figures* with which he adorned the *upper* stories of the edifice, I have adopted his ideas generally in the following drawing, with the exception of *adding a frieze and cornice to each of the stories*, as will be seen, also, hereafter, in the outlines of the "Pyramid of Papantla."



RESTORATION OF THE PYRAMID OF XOCHICALCO.

Such, in all probability—from the authority of unimpeachable traditions, and the remains now crumbling to ruins and overgrown with the forest at its base—such, was the Pyramid of Xochicalco, when it first rose aloft covered with its curious symbols of mystic rites, and received from the Indian builders its dedication to the gods, or to the glory of some sovereign whose bones were to moulder within. Who those builders and consecrators were no one can tell. There is no tradition of them or of the temple. When first discovered, no one knew to what it had been devoted, or who had built it. It had outlasted both history and memory!

But no matter who built, or what nation used it as temple or tomb, those who conceived and executed it were persons of taste, refinement and civilization; and I venture to assert, that no one who examines the figures with which it is covered, can fail to connect the designers with the people who dwelt and worshipped in the palaces and temples of Uxmal and Palenque.

Fragmentary fragment as this pyramid is, it may still be deemed in outline, material, carving, design, and execution, one of the most remarkable of the antiquities of America. It denotes, besides, an ancient civilization and architectural progress, that may well entitle the inhabitants of our Continent to the character of an Original race. On the other hand, (for those who are fond of tracing resemblances, and believe that whatever there was of art, science, or cultivation among the aborigines, came from the "old world,") there is much in the shape, proportions and sculptures of this pyramid, to connect its architects with the Egyptians.

* * * * * * *

The day was far advanced, when I stood for the last time on the corner-stone of the upper terrace and looked at the beautiful prospect around me. It was the centre of a mighty plain. Running due north were the remains of an *ancient paved road*, leading over prairie and barranca to the city,* distinctly visible at the foot of the Sierra Madre—and, all around, at the distance of some miles, east, west, and south, rose lofty mountains, among whose valley-folds nestled the white walls of haciendas that owed their strength and massiveness to the spoliation of the very ruins on which I stood. Palace, temple, tomb, fortification, whatever it was, (and to all these uses has it been appropriated by the guessing tribe of antiquarians,) the Pyramid of Xochicalco was nobly situated in its day and generation, and no one will now visit its crumbling remains without a better opinion of the unfortunate races who were pushed aside to make room for the growth and expansion of European power.

* * * * * * *

TETECALA.

It was near three o'clock, when we again took up our line of march under a burning sun; and, lingering with Pedro until after my companions had departed, I found, on reaching the bottom of the hill, that they were already out of sight, and that all traces of them were lost on the path among the trees and bushes. I shouted—but there was no answer. I inquired at the first Indian hut I passed, but no travellers had gone that way; and, although following a distinct and apparently straightforward road, I acknowledge that I was lost. To add to my disquietude, I had forgotten the name of the village at which we were to lodge. It was useless, however, to sit down in the forest, and I therefore resolved to push onward with confidence that the path led somewhere. I had not gone more than half a mile when I came up with another straggler of our party—lost, like myself—and we trotted along side by side, occasionally shouting for our companions, and then halting a moment to take breath in the close and sultry air filled with clouds of mosquitos and flies that settled on our hands and faces as soon as we drew our bridles.

Suddenly, our road terminated at the margin of a wide stream, which was swollen over its banks by the late heavy rains, and was dashing along with the rapidity of a mill-race. On the opposite shore the road again reappeared, and we judged that this was of course the ford.

Pedro, who was mounted on a stout, long-legged animal, was sent ahead, and partly swimming his animal and partly wading, he reached the bank in safety. I immediately followed, but my horse was both short limbed, and weary from the exertions he had made in the morning. Scarcely had the water risen above his girth when he was off his legs. I kept his head

* Cuernavaca

toward the opposite shore, and as much against the stream as possible; but with all his efforts he could make no headway, and was swept bodily down by the current toward a wreck of broken trees and branches that bent over the water from the bank we had quitted. I spurred, whipped, encouraged him, without avail. He made another effort; but failing in that, kept his head above water and resigned himself to the tide. I felt my situation to be dangerous, especially as I was rapidly approaching the long and sharp branches, by which I knew that I should be severely injured. I resolved, therefore, to leap off and swim for the bank, which was not more than a dozen paces distant. But, at that moment, Pedro galloped down to the point opposite which I was drifting, and, as I was about executing my purpose, I saw his lasso, flung with great accuracy, settle around my animal's head. With the end wound round his saddle-bow, Pedro stood firmly on the shore, and, in a minute, the action of the current had swung my horse on soundings. Drenched as I was, I shall ever hereafter feel a debt of gratitude to a lasso—which is rarely felt for anything in the shape of a noose.

My companion and myself continued our journey, both wet, (for he had fared not much better than myself,) but both gratified with our drenching, as it had the effect of a bath, while the evaporation of the water from our soaking clothes, cooled and refreshed us.

Thus through valley and glade, (rarely meeting an Indian or passing one of their miserable houses,) and without intelligence of our party, we pushed onward until about six o'clock in the evening, when we reached a wide and cultivated plain, traversed by a considerable stream, resembling in its verdant banks and soft meadows set in a frame of lofty mountains, the scenery about the sources of our Potomac. We had not long journied over this plain before we passed the hacienda of Miacatlan. At a short distance, to the right of it, appeared the village of Tetecala. As soon as a passing Indian mentioned the name, we recollected it to be that of our halting-place for the night.

We speedily passed an Indian suburb, buried, as usual throughout the *tierra caliente*, in flowers and foliage, among which lounged the idle and contented population. Here we were met by a guide, who had been sent forward by our courteous entertainers, and we were soon under the shelter of their friendly roof.

Our horses were quickly unsaddled and bounding over the wide corral; and refreshed by a clean suit and a cigarrito, I had strolled over the tasteful village, and visited the market and the church (one of the neatest I have seen, especially in the simple and true taste of its architecture, and the arrangement of the altar and the pulpits,) before our companions made their appearance. It turned out, after all, that they—not we—had mistaken the road, and had wandered much out of their way under the direction of a guide. It is better sometimes to have none.

In addition to all our antiquarian researches, to-day we have travelled nearly fifteen leagues, and although I have earned a right to a soft pillow

and bed, yet as there are none of these comforts in the house for me, I wrap myself in my serape on the hard settee, with full expectation of a night of sound repose.

* * * * * *

21*st September—Wednesday.* We left Tetecala rather late this morning, without other refreshments than a cup of chocolate and a biscuit, as our intention was to stop at the hacienda of Cocoyotla, where we arrived about 11 o'clock.

We had no letter of introduction to Señor Sylva, the proprietor; but we were, nevertheless, most kindly received by him. He requested us to dismount, and to amuse ourselves by inspecting his garden and orange-grove while he ordered breakfast.

This is a small, but one of the most beautiful estates in the *tierra caliente*. A handsome chapel-tower has recently been added to the old edifice; a wing on broad arches has been given to the dwelling, and the garden is kept in tasteful order.

Back of the house and bordering the garden, sweeps along a sweet stream, some twenty yards in width, and, by canals from it, the grounds are plentifully supplied with water. But the gem of Cocoyotla is the orangery. It is not only a grove, but a miniature forest, interspersed with broad-leaved plaintains, guyavas, cocos, palms, and mammeis. It was burthened with fruits; and a multitude of birds, undisturbed by the sportsman, have made their abodes among the shadowy branches.

We sauntered about in the delicious and fragrant shade for half an hour, while the gardener supplied us with the finest fruits. We were then summoned to an excellent breakfast of several courses, garnished with capital wine.

When our repast was concluded, Señor Sylva conducted us over his house; showed us the interior of the neat church, where he has made pedestals for the figures of various saints out of *stalactites* from some neighboring cavern; and finally dismissed us, with sacks of the choicest fruit, which he had ordered to be selected from his grove.

RANCHO DE MICHAPAS.

P. M. Our journey from this hacienda was toward the Cave of Cacahuawamilpa, which we propose visiting to-morrow, and we have reached, to-night, the rancho of Michapas.

This is a new feature in our travels. Hitherto we have been guests at haciendas and comfortable town dwellings, but to-night we are lodged in a rancho—a small farmer's dwelling—an Indian hut.

We arrived about five o'clock, after a warm ride over wide and solitary moors, with a back ground of the mountains we passed yesterday. In

front another Sierra stretches along the horizon; and in the foreground of the picture, a lake, near a mile in circuit, spreads out its silver sheet in the sunset, margined with wide-spreading trees and covered with water-fowl.

The house is built of mud and reeds, matted together; that is, there are four walls without other aperture but a door, while a thatch, supported on poles, spreads on either side from the roof-tree, forming a porch in front. This thatch is not allowed to touch the tops of the walls, but between them and it, all around the house, a space of five or six feet has been left, by means of which a free circulation of air is kept up within. The interior (of one room,) is in perfect keeping with this aboriginal simplicity. Along the western wall there are a number of wretched engravings of saints, with inscriptions and verses beneath them; next, a huge picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, with tarnished gilded rays, blazes in the centre; and near the corner is nailed a massive cross, with the figure of our Saviour apparently bleeding at every pore. A reed and spear are crossed below it, and large wreaths and festoons of marigolds are hung around. Six tressels, with reeds spread over them, stand against the wall; and in one corner a dilapidated canopy, with a tattered curtain, rears its pretentious head to do the honors of state-bedstead. The floor is of earth, and, in a corner, are safely stowed our saddles, bridles, guns, pistols, holsters, swords and spurs; so that taking a sidelong glance at the whole establishment, you might well doubt whether you were in a stable, church, sleeping-room or chicken-coop!

Don Miguel Benito—the owner and proprietor of this valuable catalogue of domestic comforts—received us with great cordiality. He is a man some fifty years of age; delights in a shirt, the sleeves of which have been so long rolled up, that there is no longer anything to roll down, and a pair of those elastic leather-breeches that last one's life-time in Mexico, and grow to any size that may be required, as the fortunate owner happens to fatten with his years. Not the least curious part of Don Miguel's household, is his female establishment. He appears to be a sort of Grand Turk, as not less than a dozen women, of all colors and complexions, hover about his dwellings, while at least an equal number of little urchins, with light hair and dark, (but all with an extraordinary resemblance to the Don,) roll over the mud floors of the neighboring huts, or amuse themselves by *lassoing* the chickens.

G——, the caterer of our mess, thought it but a due compliment to Don Miguel, who does not disdain to receive your money, to order supper—though we resolved to fall back in case of necessity upon our own stores, and accordingly, unpacked some pots of soup and sardines.

In the course of an hour, a board was spread upon four sticks, and in the middle of it was placed a massive brown earthen platter, with the stew. At the same time, a dirty copper spoon and a hot tortillia were laid before each of us. Although we had determined to hold ourselves in reserve for our soups, yet there was but little left of the savory mess.

Our turtle, flanked with lemons and claret, then came into play; and the repast was ended by another smoking platter of the universal frijoles.

Wild and primitive as was the scene among these simple Indians, I have seldom passed a pleasanter evening, enlivened with song and wit. When we crept to our reed tressels and serapes, at eleven o'clock, I found that the state-bed was already occupied by a smart-looking fellow from the West Coast, (who I take to have been rather deeply engaged in the contraband) and his young wife—a lively looking lass, rather whiter than the rest of the brood—who had spruced herself up on our arrival. Twelve of our party lodged together in that capacious apartment, while Don Miguel betook himself, with the rest of his household, to mats under the porch.

22*nd September*. It rained heavily last night, but the morning, as usual, was fresh, clear and warm. After a cup of chocolate, we sallied forth toward the Cave of Cacahuawamilpa, having previously dispatched our arriéros with the mules to Tetecala, to await our return on our journey toward Cuautla.

Our forces this morning were increased by the addition of some twelve or thirteen Indians, who had been engaged by Don Miguel to accompany us as guides to the cavern. They bore with them the rockets and torches which were to be burned within, and a large quantity of twine for thridding the labyrinth.

Leaving the lake, situated on the very edge of the table-land, we struck down a deep barranca, at the bottom of which our horses sunk nearly to their girths at every footstep, in an oozy marsh, that had not been improved by last night's rain. But passing these bogs, we ascended a steep line of hills, whence there was a splendid view of the snow-capped volcanoes of Puebla, and soon reached the Indian village of Totlawahmilpa, where it was necessary to procure a "license" to visit the cavern, or, in other words, where the authorities extort a sum of money from every passenger, under the plea of keeping the road open, and the entrance safe. As we had special passports from the Mexican Government to go where we pleased in the *tierra caliente*, I thought this precaution unnecessary, but our Indians refused to budge a peg without a visit to the Alcaldé; and therefore, while some of the party entered a hut, and set the women to cooking tortillias, others proceeded with the passports to the civic authorities.

We found the Alcaldé to be a stout old Indian, in bare feet, shirt sleeves, skin trowsers, and nearly as dark as an African. He was enjoying his leisure by a literary conversation with the schoolmaster who was his secretary, and the two were discovered in the midst of a host of ragged boys from eight to sixteen years old, seated on benches and learning their letters.

The moment we appeared, the Alcaldé rose to receive us with great dignity, and handing the passport to his secretary, he listened attentively

while he heard that Mr. —— and Mr. ——, of the Diplomatic Corps, were fully authorized by the Supreme Government to travel wheresoever they pleased without let, hindrance, or molestation from any of the good citizens of the Mexican Republic. When the secretary had concluded the document, and the Alcaldé had looked at it—upside down—and they had examined the signature of Vieyra and Bocanegra, and expressed themselves perfectly satisfied of their genuineness, they retired to a corner for consultation.

"The Señores," said the Alcaldé, turning to me, "wish to see the cavern, and they have permission from the Alcaldés and Chiefs in Mexico to go where they please;—this is true; but that liberty does not refer to the Cave of Cacahuawamilpa, which is *under* ground, while the passport relates only to what is *above!* The Señores must have a license from the prefect here, and, moreover, they must pay for it."

I told him that the Diplomatic Corps never paid for any such permissions. He shrugged his shoulders and said that might be, and no doubt was all very true in the city of Mexico, but that it was not the custom *here;* "*los diplomaticos* must fare like other people and *pay* for a license."

I thought of Stephens and his "broad seal;" and I produced my passport from the Department of State with the coat of arms of the United States, and the signature of Mr. Webster; but it was all Hebrew to the scribe; the eagle was *not* the Mexican eagle, and "*Webastair,*" he had never heard of. He shook his forefinger from right to left, as if intimating that it was all a humbug, and that no such man was ever known in Mexico. They were old stagers in the matters of fees, and strangers did not drop down on such visits every day of the year!

While this by-scene was going on, the school exercises were, of course, suspended, and the pupils, with staring eyes and gaping mouths, listened to the discussion. At length, as time was rapidly passing, the Alcaldé was asked *how much* he wanted, and told that we would give him no extravagant sum. He named, I believe, ten dollars as his price, but we compromised for five—two of which were for the prefect, two for himself, and one for the secretary. As I was anxious to get the autograph of so distinguished a functionary, I asked him for a *written* license; but he replied that it was not necessary. "You may go now," said he; "no one will molest you;" and turning to our guide: "The Señores are *muy caballeros;*" (which may be translated, "*very* gentlemen") "take care of them, and at your peril, see that they come back safely."

The secretary made a bow—the Alcaldé another—our guide led the way, and we rejoined our party at the Indian hut, where they had half a dozen women baking tortillas as fast as they could pat them, for our breakfast at the cave.

We lost no time, but mounting at once, pushed over a hill or two until we reached a small path leading through a corn-field, at the foot of which ran a clear and narrow rivulet. There we dismounted, and crossing the hill, the mouth of the cavern was pointed out on the opposite side of the

glen, half way up the mountain. The dell was filled with tangled vines and shrubbery, growing up among lofty trees that sprung amid the rocks and *debris* of the hill-side. The path to the bottom of it was steep, and so covered with tall grass and bushes that it became necessary to send an Indian with a machete to cut a path.

On reaching the stream at the foot of the opposite side, the glen was found to be quite as tangled, and an Indian was again despatched to clear the way. As he cut, we climbed after each other, slowly and painfully over the sharp and rugged rocks. When near the top, however, and in sight of the entrance, a tall shelf of rock, slanting at a sharp angle with the hill, opposed itself to our farther progress. It was about four yards wide—below it the precipice plunged down almost perpendicularly for two hundred feet, while there was nothing to grasp but the bare surface of the rock, and a few threads of vines that grew from the fissures of the impending cliff. A ledge of about three inches had been chipped in this rock, along which it was necessary to pass. The barefooted Indians crossed as nimbly as cats, and those of our party who wore shoes followed with ease; but I, in a pair of water-proof, thick-soled boots, and with not the steadiest head over steep places, found the transit exceedingly difficult. I hung on, however, by the vines, and succeeded in crossing in a very lubberly manner.

The Indian women with our tortillas, and the detachment we had despatched in the morning with our cold ham, beef and sardines, had already arrived. There was a huge rock with a flat surface, upon which we spread our viands—fruit, cocoanuts, and pines—and made as picturesque a breakfast table as ever was longed for by a pic-nic party within a hundred miles of London.

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CAVERN OF CACAHUAWAMILPA.

I was one of the last to leave the entrance of the cave, which hangs in a huge arch of sixty feet span, fringed with a curtain of vines and tropical plants. Our party preceded me for some distance along the road that descends rapidly for the first hundred yards. Each one of the guides, Indians, and travellers, carried a light; and when I saw the swarthy crew, with their savage features, long hair, and outlandish dress, disappearing gradually until nothing was left but the dot-like glimmer of their torches in the distance, it seemed more like some spectacle of witchcraft in melodrama, than an actual scene occurring among folks on earth. I lit my torch and followed.

The first hundred yards brings you to the bottom of the cavern, and, if not warned in time, you are likely to plunge at this season of the year, up to your knees in the water. You cross a small lake, and immedi

ately before you, under the vast Gothic vault of the cave, rises a lofty stalagmite pillar with a fringe falling from the top of it, formed of the brightest foam, congealed in a moment. A mimic pulpit springs from the wall, covered with elaborate tracery,—and, hard by, an altar is spread with the fairest napkins, while, above it, depends a crystal curtain hanging in easy folds, each one of which flashes back the light of your torch as if carved from silver.

We fastened the end of our twine to a pillar of the altar, and struck out westwardly, in the direction of the cavern. After a short distance we turned slightly to the south, and passing down a pile of rocks that had fallen from the roof, entered the *second chamber*.

In the centre of this, a huge stalagmite has been formed. We called it the Tower of Babel. It is a lofty mass, two hundred feet in circumference, surrounded, from top to bottom, by rings of fountain-basins hanging from its sides, each wider than the other, and carved by the action of water into as beautiful shapes as if cut by the hand of a sculptor. An Indian climbed to the top of it, and firing a blue-light, illuminated the whole cavern. By the bright, unearthly blaze, every nook and corner became visible, and the waters and carving of the fountain-tower stood out in wonderful relief.

We penetrated to the *third chamber*. Here there was no centre column, but the effect was produced by the immensity of the vault. It appears as though you might set the whole of St. Peter's beneath it, with dome and cross. It is a magnificent cathedral; the wall sheeted with stalactites, and the floor meandered by those arabesque troughs of pure white, and antique pattern, which we had seen at the Tower of Babel.

An Indian fired a rocket, which exploded as it struck the top of the immense dome, and amid the falling stars, the detonation reverberated from side to side of the immense vault with the roar of a cannonade. A sheet of stalactite was struck, and it sounded with the clearness of a bell. Four Roman candles were lighted and placed on rocks midway up the temple sides, and they shed a faint illumination, like the twilight stealing through the fretted windows of an old cathedral.

Beyond this chamber was a narrow path between the almost perpendicular rocks, and, as we passed, the guide crept through an entrance near the floor, and holding his torch aloft, so that the light fell as from an invisible source, displayed a delicious little cave, arched with snowy stalactites. In the middle rose a centre-table, covered with its fringed folds, and adorned with goblin nicknacks. It was the boudoir of some gnome or coquettish fairy!

Two rocks standing beyond this retreat, are the portals of another chamber, groined, like the rest, in Gothic arches with the tracery of purest stalactites, while its floor is paved all over with beautiful little globular stalagmites. In a corner fountain, we found the skeleton head of a serpent.

The path beyond this is nearly blocked up by immense masses that have fallen from the roof. Passing over these, you attain another vaulted

cathedral, bright as the rest with flashing stalactites, while its floor is covered knee-deep with water. The dark lake, lit up by the blaze of a dozen blue-lights and Roman candles and reflecting the flashing walls of the cavern, the torches of the party, and the tribe of attendant Indians—would have made a picture for Martin.

We had now penetrated nearly five thousand feet in the interior of the earth, and the guides said that the chambers were still innumerable beyond. Persons have slept here and gone on the next day, but no termination has yet been discovered. Some years since, in exploring beyond the usual limits, a party of travellers discovered the skeleton of a man; his bones were white and dry, and the Indian guides, after placing them in a heap, erected a cross on the top of it, with which they consecrated the whole cavern as the grave of the unknown dead. Whether he was a lost traveller, an absconding debtor, a suicidal lover, or a wretched murderer seeking concealment from vindictive pursuers, no one can tell!

From this chamber we returned to the entrance by the clew of our twine. I scarcely remember anything so beautiful as the view, when we caught the first glimpse of daylight, shining, like a gray dawn, through the green drapery of vines that mantled the mouth of the cavern and reflected on the lake-like pool.

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We returned to the foot of the hills, where we found our servants and horses, and refreshed ourselves from the fatigue produced by the incessant exercise and exertions of the last three hours. Retreating through the glen to Don Miguel's rancho, and paying him liberally for his entertainment, we bade farewell to this part of Mexico, and turned our faces eastward.

We were obliged to return to-night to the village of Tetecala, and as the afternoon was already far advanced, we obtained a guide who knew a nearer cut over the mountain, than the road by which we reached the rancho on yesterday.

Night came upon us before we had half finished our journey, and I know no more of the road from actual observation. It was pitchy dark, and there were a number of ravines and barrancas to pass; but such is the unerring sure-footedness of animals of Mexico, that I reined my horse as near the guide as I could conveniently get, and followed the lead of his sagacious mule. From the manner in which the beasts climbed and slid over rocks, in the utter darkness, I have no doubt that the path was beset with many perils. After passing the mountain. we had to swim a river near thirty yards wide, which was considerably swollen by the late rains, so that, what with fatigue and danger, I was glad enough to reach our destination; where the first salute from our entertainers, when they heard

that we had made a night-march over the mountain, was, "Thank God, there were no accidents!"

A smoking supper was soon on the table, and although our worthy hosts (who had not made a journey that day of near two thousand varas into the bowels of the earth,) were exceedingly anxious to prolong the chat after our cheerful meal, we slipped off, one by one, to our cots and sofas. We have travelled seven leagues to-day, besides our pedestrian excursion in the cave.

HACIENDA OF SAN NICOLAS.

23*rd September*. We left Tetecala this morning at eight o'clock, with the intention of passing to-night at the hacienda of St. Nicolas, which belongs to the Messrs. J——. For the present at least we seem to have done with the mountains, as our road to-day lay entirely over the plain. During the three last days, we have been wandering among gigantic mountains and over wild moors, where the solitude of nature reigns in all its majesty; but the picture varies in the direction of CUAUTLA. The mountains sink into the plain which is extremely fertile, and cultivated with the nicest economy.

About twelve o'clock we saw the hacienda lying in the distance, in the lap of the plain, with a small hill or two hard by, just large enough to vary the scenery. As we approached the white walled buildings we could not help remarking the uncommonly neat appearance of everything about the estate. The sugar-fields were in capital order, the roads smooth, the fences had been put up, the cattle were under the care of men. The Indian village, inhabited by many of the laborers on the estate, was tidy and comfortable, and there was a cleanness and decency in the appearance of the people, that I had not seen elsewhere. Indeed, the whole view of this plain, hemmed in by the distant summits of the mountains, reminded me strongly of some of the pictures of rural beauty constantly presented to the traveller in New England, and I was the more forcibly struck with this, when I looked from the corridor of the hacienda over the whole expanse of country, and saw it dotted here and there with villages and haciendas, the white towers of whose chapels rose up beautifully from an unbroken mass of verdure.

We were received at this plantation by the administrador, or steward, who had been expecting us for an hour or more; and though he had already partaken of his dinner, (believing that we did not intend visiting St. Nicolas to-day,) he immediately ordered another, in the meantime showing us to a large and cool apartment, containing a number of beds, where we made a hasty toilet.

We took a *siesta* after dinner, and then walked with Don A. over the estate. The whole of the fields are planted with cane for a great dis-

tance around the house, which forms, by itself, a very extensive establishment.

First, there is the dwelling, a large two-story edifice, having in the basement all the offices, and the store where every necessary is sold to the Indians; above this are the kitchens, parlors, bedrooms, and an immense corridor on arches, looking toward the east, filled with caged birds, and hung with hammocks, where the family pass most of the long warm days of summer. In front is the *corral*, on the west of which are the store-houses and buildings to receive the crop; while on the east is another huge edifice where the boilers, engines, crushing machines, cooling vats, moulding apartments, &c., constitute the *trapiche* of the hacienda. It is a little city in itself.

At sunset, all the Indians employed on the premises assembled under the corridor on the basement floor, to account to the administrador for their day's labor and their presence. As he called their names, each one replied with "*Alabo á Dios*,"—"I praise God," and ranged himself against the wall in a line with those who had already responded. When the whole list had been examined, they were dismissed, and departed in a body singing an Indian hymn to the Virgin, the sounds of which died away in the distance as they plodded home over the level fields to their village.

At night we heard the sound of a clarionet, bass-drum, and flute, at some distance from the dwelling, and on inquiry, discovered that a band of musicians had been organized in an adjoining village, by the owner of the hacienda. We mustered a company and strolled over. The whole of a large hut had been appropriated for a musical hall, where the performers were just assembling; while others, who had already arrived, were engaged in tuning their instruments. The leader was quite a respectable-looking Indian, decently dressed, who played the violin; the clarionet player was fortunate in the possession of cotton drawers and a shirt; the bassoon had a pair of trousers but no shirit; the serpent was the wildest looking Indian I ever saw, with long dishevelled black hair, and eyes worthy of his instrument; the big drum was a huge portly old negro, who reminded me of many of our performers on it at home; while the octave flute was an urchin of not more than twelve, the wickedest little devil imaginable, but a fellow of infinite talent and a capital performer.

The night was rather too hot to permit us to remain long in the apartment with an Indian crowd; we therefore took our seats outside, where we were favored by the self-taught amateurs with several airs from recent operas, performed in a style that would not have injured the reputation of many a military band at home.

It may reasonably be judged, from a scene like this, that the Indians have talents for one of the arts requiring a high degree of natural delicacy and refinement. If it had been the care of all Spanish proprietors gradually to bring forth their latent dispositions, as the Señores J. have done, Mexico would now present a picture very different from that of the

degradation which fills its valleys with a slothful, ignorant, and debased multitude.

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When we returned to the house, we found that some travellers who passed in the course of the day, had given an account of robbers on the road we are to travel to-morrow. About two weeks since, seven armed and mounted ruffians attacked two Frenchmen and their servants near the hacienda of Trenta. One of the Frenchmen was severely wounded, but the other, aided by the two *mozos*, succeeded in beating off the robbers, who left one of their number dead on the field, and his horse and trappings as spoils for the victor.

CUAUTLA DE AMILPAS AND HACIENDA DE STA. INEZ.

24*th September*. We left the hospitable hacienda of San Nicolas at 4 o'clock this morning, and passed through a great number of Indian villages, and some haciendas of considerable extent, especially that of Trenta, which derives its name from the fact that it was originally purchased for the sum of thirty dollars. With its village, its church, (nearly a cathedral in size,) its immense sugar works and princely domain, I suppose it could not be acquired now for much less than half a million.

After enjoying a fine view of the volcano of Popocatepetl at sunrise, and passing the village of Tlaltisappan, we struck into the mountain gorges which we had been for some time approaching. The ground gradually rose, the glens and defiles became more numerous, and among the wild and tangled forests of these solitary mountains we passed many ill looking wretches, armed and mounted, but always in too small a number to attack our party. There is no doubt they were robbers, as several had their faces partly disguised, while their weapons were cocked and resting in their hands as they passed us. We cocked ours, also, and thus moved on fairly quits with the vagabonds.

On the sides of these mountains, there were continuous groves of that tall pillar-like species of the cactus, which is called "*organos*."

The heat became insufferable toward noon, and I felt, for the first time, weary of our journey among the lonely hills and defiles. Our impatience to reach Cuautla was increased by the accounts of the Indians we encountered on the road, who invariably added a league or half league to the distance as we advanced. At length, however, after passing through a very extensive corn-field, which I computed to contain at least five hundred acres, we reached the valley of Amilpas, and, in half an hour more, entered an Indian village bowered in the foliage of bananas and palms, through the midst of which ran a cool and sparkling streamlet. Here

we halted to refresh ourselves, as the sun was blistering our skins and we burned with a fever that was scarcely mitigated by profuse perspiration. After leaving this village, Cuautla appeared immediately on our left, with a rapid river running by it; while, in front, was the stately hacienda of Cuauwistla, belonging to the Dominican monks of Mexico, from the revenues of which a liberal sum is annually set apart for the entertainment of travellers.

By some accident, the chief of our party had neglected to obtain a letter of introduction to any of the haciendas in the neighborhood of Cuautla, and we expected to procure comfortable accommodations at the inn of the town. We therefore pressed onward, without stopping at Cuauwistla, where, I had no doubt, the general letter of introduction with which I had been favored by the Archbishop of the United States to all the Church in Mexico, would have procured us an immediate welcome.

CUAUTLA is a perfect Southern city. The houses are small and airy; clear water gurgles through the middle of the street; broad-leaved trees fling their branches over the low dwellings. The women loll, half-dressed, in the windows and doors, gazing at nothing or each other; the men seem to have as little to do as the women, and the whole has an air of the "dolce far niente," which prevails in this mild and tempting climate.

Passing through the square, we entered a bye-street and arrived at the door of the *meson*.

I remembered immediately my experience at Perote, and the account given by Latrobe of *his* experience at this very inn.

The gate of the court-yard was thrown open for us. In front lay a narrow lane, on one side of which was a shed, and beneath it a couple of sheep munching a stack of green corn in a corner, while a couple of turkeys picked up what they could find. On the roof a lot of sheep-skins, recently taken from the animal, were spread out to dry in the sun. At the end of the lane was the kitchen of the meson, which seemed also to be the cobbler's stall of the burly landlord, who, tucking up his apron in front, ran out to salute us before we dismounted, followed by his stout wife, and a greasy scullion as fat, dirty, and disgusting as Maritornes.

We inquired if he could "accommodate us?" "Si Señores, si Señores!" said he, with a strong emphasis on the *si*, as if surprised at our even doubting for an instant the capabilities of his establishment.

It will be remembered that we now numbered twelve in the party. We asked him (still without dismounting) to show us the rooms.

From the end of the lane I have described, another struck off at right-angles with it, and both of its sides were adorned with a row of one-story windowless cabins, over the doors of which appeared, in true hotel fashion, the numbers 1.—2.—3.—4.—5.—6.

G—— got down to examine, and the landlord led the way. He first opened No. 3. It was eight feet long, about six wide, and ten high; in one corner lay a pool of mud on the earthen floor, and the walls were literally black with fleas. G—— at once objected to this, and the landlord said that it was of course not intended for the Señores, but for the baggage and the mozos. He had "another, more comfortable" for ourselves; and stepping across the street, opened No. 6, which, from its exterior, appeared to be of the same size of No. 3. Scarcely had he turned the bolt—when out walked a full grown ass!

But our discontent did not satisfy the landlord—he did not see why we could not be "accommodated in rooms that were good enough for other folks—and we might praise the Virgin if we got better in Cuautla!"

There was no time for discussion, however, and as we were hungry, and would rather betake ourselves to the fields and sleep under the trees than submit to the vermin of Cuautla, I proposed that we should return to Cuauwistla. In the meantime, however, Don Juan Black had bethought him of all his friends in the village, and discovered that the administrador of Santa Inez was an old acquaintance who had often requested a visit in his journeys to the *tierra caliente*.

It is true that we made a formidable party, with horses and mules, besides our own ravenous appetites, but Black insisted that he knew the people of the country, and that we would undoubtedly be welcome at the neighboring plantation.

He was, therefore, at once put at the head of the troop, and we marched out of the court-yard under a shower of abuse from the cobbling host—as a set of "caprichosos Ingleses, who deserved to rot on the road-side." His spouse and Maritornes fell into their parts of the denunciatory trio, as the hoof of the last horse struck his abominable gate-sill.

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The hacienda of Santa Inez is situated in the midst of sugar-fields to the north of the town, and the works, residence, chapel, and Indian village, are bordered by a beautiful stream among some of the finest forest trees I have seen in the Republic. I shall never forget the kind reception of Don Felipe Vargas;—it was that of a tried old friend. Ample accommodations and beds were offered us; a meal (which, in apologizing for, he called a "penitencia,") was quickly spread on snowy damask, served with a fine display of silver and excellent claret; and the whole was seasoned with a welcome that will mark Don Felipe in my memory, as a man to be trusted in times of difficulty.

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It was Saturday evening, and after a walk in the charming groves that border the brook and Indian village, from which there was a noble pros-

pect of the whole of Popocatepetl, with the sunset tinging its snows, we returned to the hacienda and took seats in the lower court, near the office where the clerk of the administrador was paying off the hands for their week's work. Here chocolate was handed us, served in the same tasteful style as our dinner.

The hands were all mustered, and came up with the usual "Alabo a Dios!" to receive their weekly wages, as on last evening at San Nicolas.

Don Felipe informs me, that all the ordinary expenses of this estate are $500 per week; but during the working season they rise frequently to $1200. Three hundred laborers are usually employed at two and a half to three *reals* a day, and the total production of the hacienda is about 40,000 loaves annually—the loaves averaging twenty-three pounds—or, in all, 920,000 pounds of refined sugar. Here, as elsewhere, the molasses nearly pays the expenses.

He complains greatly of the worthlessness of the Indians, and expresses hopes of improvement from the establishment of schools in Cuautla, where the young children learn rapidly, if they are allowed by their intemperate and gambling parents to continue in their classes. He alleges, that the greatest punishment for the Indians is to discharge and expel them entirely from the estate upon which they and their ancestors, from time immemorial, have worked; but he intimates that other punishments are resorted to for trifling faults and excesses, and I doubt not the whip is made to play an important part in the discipline of Mexican plantations.

Mr. Stephens, in his last work on Yucatan, gives a scene of this sort which he witnessed. "Looking into the corridor," he says, "we saw the poor Indian on his knees on the pavement, with his arms clasped around the knees of another Indian, so as to present his back fairly to the lash. At every blow he rose on one knee, and sent forth a piercing cry. He seemed struggling to retain it, but it burst forth in spite of all his efforts. His whole bearing showed the subdued character of the present Indians, and with the last stripe the expression of his face seemed that of thankfulness for not getting more. Without uttering a word, he crept to the major domo, took his hand, kissed it, and walked away. No sense of degradation crossed his mind. Indeed, so humbled is this once fierce people, that they have a proverb of their own: 'Los Indios no oyen sino por las nalgas'—the Indians only hear through their backs."

In what then is this Indian population, throughout the planting, farming and mining districts, equal to our slaves? Although not hereditary property by LAW, they are hereditary by *custom, and the force of those circumstances* which deny them the opportunity of bettering their condition, either by emigration to foreign countries, or by diffusing themselves over their own. They form a degraded caste. They are subjected to the control of masters and overseers, and although it is true that they are regularly paid for their labor and habitual degradation, yet they are ignorant, gambling, intemperate, and liable at any moment to be submitted to the lash,

against which, they have not the courage to offer the slightest resistance. With all the boast, therefore, of the authorities of Mexico, that no man is held in bondage within its limits, I still think that no candid person can inspect the condition of these laborers, without giving the palm to our negroes,—and exclaiming, indignantly, at the masked slavery which is carried on from year to year, without the slightest prospect of ameliorating the character or condition of the miserable natives.

If a man become *slave by descent*, under the well-established laws of a nation by which the institution is recognized, he has always a master, whose duty it is to afford him food, raiment and protection, in recompense for his toil; and although moralists may say that slavery is in its very nature deteriorating, yet it does not crush the very spirit from the negro, or tend always to his debasement. He is sober; he cares for his family; he feels the duties of the social relations, even in his "quarter;" and is ambitious of the degree of respectability he may acquire among his fellow slaves. His condition must, therefore, both physically and intellectually, be superior to that of the Indian who becomes a slave, in spite of the law, by the servility of his character and the loathsome vices that absorb his earnings, without a care for the comfort of his family, the education of his children, or even the personal appearance he presents among his fellows.

When we remember the degree of civilization that had been attained by these races, anterior to the Mexican conquest, it is impossible to believe that their present debasement is to be alone attributed to an enervating climate; nor can Mexico ever claim a high standing among nations, until she blots this stain of hypocritical freedom from the fairest portions of her territory. With the improvement of the lot and character of her Indians, (who number near four millions of the seven that compose her whole population,) the steady advancement of the nation will proceed; but until that occurs, her fondest admirers can have but little hope, either for her progress or even for her continuance as a nation.

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Señor Vargas, with true Mexican hospitality, had an excellent supper prepared for us at nine o'clock; but I was too much fatigued to partake of it, and retired to most comfortable quarters, having a bed entirely to myself, which I mention as a luxury

CUAUTLA.

25th September. The next morning was Sunday. We arose early and went to the town of Cuautla, passing great numbers of Indians with *half-shaved heads*, on their way to the Sunday market, where they usually assemble in the Plaza to purchase and sell their commodities. As we reached the town, the bells were ringing for mass, and we strolled into several of the churches. One of them was being repaired, and the altars were filled with skulls and bones that had been taken up while the floor was undergoing the requisite renovation. In the *parroquia* or parish church, the stench from the dead bodies beneath the rough boards over which we trod, was so abominable that I hastened out of it, without examining some figures of Saints and Apostles done up in dresses that resembled very much the antique uniforms of the eighteenth century. Such anachronisms however are of frequent occurrence, and I have before alluded to them, in the instance where even our Saviour was represented in one of the most splendid churches of Mexico, in purple velvet robe and a *Guayaquil sombrero!*

In the square, there were hundreds of Indians under cane booths, on mats spread with fruits, skins, rebosos, serapes, ices, orgeats, lemonade, vegetables, flowers, and all the varied products of the *tierra caliente*. I stepped into one and breakfasted on oranges, sponge cake and iced milk. The stores around the square were all open, and indeed I saw no cessation of the usual week-day occupations, except among the Indians, who thronged the Plaza. The women, as on yesterday, lolled in the broad window-sills; the men lolled opposite them, or leaned against the walls in the shade—and the excessive heat seemed to have predisposed every one, before ten o'clock, to a doze or a siesta.

In one of the stores (while Don Juan was bargaining for a horse,) the owner showed me a *centipede* of the *tierra caliente*, a horrible reptile of the scorpion kind, with which he says the old houses of Cuautla are infested. These and the *alacranes* (a sort of cross of the spider on the scorpion,) are the scourges of the warm country, and the bite of both frequently results in the extreme illness of adults, and the death of children.

As we were leaving the square, we met the cobbler landlord of the Cuautla inn. He was stumping along, with his apron rolled up, as on yesterday;—he bit his lip and shook his head, as much as to say, "Let me ever catch you out on the hills, alone, old fellows!"

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We returned to the hacienda of Sta. Inez about noon, where a sumptuous breakfast awaited us. After partaking of it, and bidding a most

reluctant farewell to our kind entertainer, we mounted and turned our faces northward, toward our home.

A wide plain skirts the foot of the sierra that hems in the Valley of Mexico, and runs from the valley of Cuautla into that of Puebla. Over it lay our road this afternoon, and after passing one of those strange and deep barrancas, down which plunged a cascade of clear water for some two hundred feet, we commenced the ascent of the range of mountains forming the last barrier between us and the Capital.

Scarcely had we mounted the hills, when it began to rain for the first time, during the day, since we left Cuernavaca, and I experienced immediately a remarkable change in the temperature, from the scorching heat in the square of Cuautla. Our serapes were at once put on, and we wore them for the rest of the evening.

Santa Inez is on the limit of the *tierra caliente;*—at five or six miles distance the culture of the sugar cane ceases, and the *tierra templada* commences.

We passed the beautiful Indian village of Acaclauca, with its green leaves, chapels, and churches, in front of one of which I saw the last tall group of palm-trees, standing out with their feathery branches relieved against the snow of Popocatepetl. It was a strange picture, mingling in one frame the tropic and the pole.

Near eight o'clock the distant barking of dogs announced our approach to the village where we designed resting until morning. Small fires were lighted before each door, and by their light we meandered through half a dozen crooked and hilly streets before we reached the house of the worthy Don Juan Gonzales, (an old friend of the Consul,) who, at a moment's notice, received us under his hospitable roof.

Don Juan is a man "well to do" in the world of his little village;—he keeps store, rents a room to a club of village folks, who like a drop of aguardiente or a quiet game of *monté;* and, above all, has the loveliest girl in the *tierra templada* for a daughter.

Don Juan ushered us ceremoniously into his long, low, back parlor. In one corner stood a picture of the Virgin with a lamp burning before it, while opposite was a table around which were gathered five of the neighbors in shirt sleeves, slouched hats, and beards of a week's growth, busy with a game of greasy cards, in the light of a dim "tallow." Ever and anon, the little sylph of a daughter brought in the liquor for the boors. It was Titania and Bottom—Ariel and the Clown,—and I longed for the pencil of Caravaggio to sketch the gamblers, or of Retzsch to embody the whole spirit of the scene.

After a frugal supper of tortillas and chocolate, we retired to feather beds and clean sheets on the floor,—but I was glad when we were called to horse at three in the morning. It had been a night of sore encounter; an army of fleas attacked us, the moment we retired, with a vigor and earnestness that did justice both to their appetite and our blood.

AYOTLA.

26th September. We were off at half-past three, by the moonlight of a cold and frosty morning, and the first streak of day found our troop winding high up the spur of hills that juts out from the sides of Popocatepetl, which was in full view, with the clouds rolling off from its lofty head as the sun rose.

Behind us, for near twenty leagues, the *tierra caliente* extended distinctly until the view was bounded by a bold and craggy sierra. We wound upward through the hill farms, hanging against the sides of the mountains, and among the pine forests, through whose branches a cold autumn wind was whistling. The road was *lined with crosses*, many of them recently erected, and hung with garlands and flowers.—It is a dangerous pass and infested by hordes of robbers, who attack the travellers either passing from Cuautla to the Valley of Mexico or returning with the proceeds of their sales.

Beyond the village of Hoochietipec we lost sight both of the plain of Cuautla and the *tierra caliente*, and soon afterward the Valley of Mexico appeared to the west.

At TENANGO we stopped to breakfast and to wait for Pedro, who had been missing for the last two hours, having lingered behind with a lame horse.

Our inn was a small rat hole of a *meson* for muleteers, with a corral of a couple of acres; but the whole establishment bore the sounding name of the "*Purisima Sangre de Christo!*"

We found, to our sorrow, that we were no longer in the land of rich haciendas and hospitable administradors. The old song of "no hai!" had recommenced. Tortillas, chilé, mollé, pan, pulqué, agua?—"No hai!" With a little coaxing, however, we got one of the women of the house to seek out the remnant of corn from their breakfast, which was soon ground into tortillas. As we were beginning to devour them, Don Juan espied an Indian bearing a couple of earthen jugs of milk, with one of which and our leathery cakes, we managed to stay our stomachs till dinner. Pedro had not yet come up with us, and as it was decided to wait for him, I laid down on a rock at the door of the meson and slept soundly.

After an hour's delay, during which the servant did not appear, and presuming that he might have passed by some other road (as he was well acquainted with this part of the country,) we again mounted, and descending by a series of inclined planes, speedily reached the level of the vale of Mexico.

This valley is exceedingly different from the *tierra caliente*. Although the temperature is milder, yet everything is dry, parched, withered and volcanic. The hill-sides and mountains are stripped of their forests—the

fields are arid—the grain small and unproductive—and the whole has a waste and moor-like appearance. The Indians seem even dirtier, if possible, than those we have left behind us, and the patient mules travel over the long and dreary sands as if in a new Arabia.

Passing through several mud-walled villages, we came at length upon the Vera Cruz road and reached the town of Ayotla, seven leagues from Mexico, about four in the afternoon. Here we found Pedro waiting for us at the door of the inn, having passed through the village of Tenango while we were enjoying our tortillas and milk within doors.

We rest here during part of to-night, and to-morrow at daylight we intend to reach home, after a journey of just three hundred miles on horseback, without robbery, accident or illness.

There are no beds for us to-night, so I shall stretch myself on the floor with my saddle-bags for a pillow. How relative are all our comforts, or ideas of comfort! If a man is really hungry he can eat unbuttered bread. If a man is really sleepy he can repose on a floor, and the hardness of the planks will never wake him. We begin life by finding nothing soft enough but our mother's bosom—we go on to the cradle—we rise to the crib—we aspire to the cot—and, at last, arrive at the dignity of a French bedstead with mattress and tambour! We think we never can sleep out of this last extreme of modern comfort—and, scarcely even out of *our own*. Yet nothing is easier. I commenced this journey, little more than a week ago, by sleeping on a sacking-bottom—and, after going through all the variations of tressels, canes, beds, cots, and hammock, at last came down to the floor and my saddle-bags, where I slept just as soundly and refreshingly.

Yet I would recommend every one who is about to travel through the *tierra caliente*, to procure a hammock of Sisal grass. With this, he is entirely his own master; and surely no mode of sleeping is more luxurious in a hot climate. You swing it from the rafters of the room—it is above the floor, clear of the walls and free from insects—it bends to each motion of the body, fitting neatly to every part of your frame—you set it in motion, and while it swings you to sleep, it fans and refreshes by its gentle waving through the air.

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Besides the beautiful scenery through which I have passed during this journey, nothing has impressed me so favorably as the unaffected hospitality we met with everywhere, whether we came introduced or not. The old phrase "Mi casa, Señor, está muy à su disposicion:" "My house is entirely at your service," was not a phrase of course—a mere formula to be gone through and forgotten. Their houses, their animals, their serv-

ants and themselves were all at our command, and with a cordiality that forbad the idea of an *arrière pensée*.

Living in the country, at a distance from large towns, with but little literature and few and irregularly received newspapers, the hacendados and their administradors are glad to welcome the traveller as a guest to their doors. With ample means of accommodation and entertainment, they enjoy as well as confer a favor, and are as thankful for your visit, as you are to them for their repasts and attentions. You feel that the account is fairly balanced, and that the other little elegancies and assiduities which are thrown in for your comfort are the result of *genuine hospitality*, and the promptings of excellent hearts. They are noble, liberal, generous gentlefolks; and I hope again to travel in the *tierra caliente*, and meet a few Señor Sylvas, Don Antonios, and Don Felipes.

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HOME.

27th September. We left Ayotla at half-past two this morning, and arrived at the city gates just after sunrise, as the cannons were firing in honor of the day which is to be celebrated by the *entombment of the remains of Santa Anna's leg that was shot off at the battle of Vera Cruz in* 1838!

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The principal streets were covered with an awning; the military came out in all their finery; the chief functionaries of the Government united in the procession; and thus, the limb of the President—cut off in 1838—buried since then at Vera Cruz—disinterred and brought to the Capital in 1842—and now, laid in a crystal vase—was borne to the cemetery of Santa Paula, where it was deposited in a monument erected to receive it by the Commissary-general of the Mexican army!

A solemn eulogium (on the President—not the leg) was then pronounced by Señor Sierra y Rosa, and the ceremonies in honor of the precious relic were concluded.

A caustic "*Protest of the dead bodies of the cemetery against the reception of the limb among them*,"—was soon afterward found on an adjacent tomb.

LETTER XXIV.

ACCOUNT OF AN ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF THE VOLCANO OF POPOCATEPETL.

INTERIOR OF THE CRATER OF POPOCATEPETL.

It is impossible to cast your eyes eastwardly over the plain, without having your view bounded by the lofty peaks of Popocatepetl—"*the smoking mountain,*" and its neighbor Iztaccihuatl—or "*the white woman*"—lifting their snowy heads far above the level of the wall-like sierra that hems in the Valley of Mexico. I had ardently longed to climb one of these mountains to survey the adjacent plains from its craggy crater, but I was constantly doomed to disappointment. Several parties that were made up, failed at the fixed time, and the rainy season coming

THE VOLCANOES—FROM TUCUBAYA.

on, I was forced to abandon the enterprise entirely. In the course, however, of my preparations for an ascent, I had enjoyed frequent conversations with Mr. Egerton, and Mr. Von Gerolt, the Prussian Chargé d'Affaires, on the subject; and by these gentlemen (who have both ascended the volcano,) I was put in possession of the preceding drawing and the substance of the following account, which has hitherto never been given in our language. As I think it extremely interesting, when compared with the various published accounts of the ascent of Mont Blanc and other mountains in the Old and New World, I shall make no apology for presenting it to you in this volume. The volcano lies about 60 miles from the city of Mexico, and, after Chimborazo, is the highest peak on this continent.

At the commencement of the rainy season of 1833, Mr. Von Gerolt and the Baron Gros, then Chargé of the French Legation in Mexico, departed from the Capital on horseback, escorted by a troop of soldiers to protect them from robbers, and followed by mules and servants bearing the necessary philosophical instruments and sufficient provisions for the journey.

They sallied forth on the Vera Cruz road, between the lakes of Tezcoco and Chalco, for eight leagues, to Ayotla—beyond which they struck off in a southwardly direction, and, at the distance of five leagues more, commenced the ascent of the Cordillera, on the summit of which a table-land is spread out about 800 feet above the level of the city. On this plain they passed the villages of Ameca and Ozumba at the foot of the volcano and its neighboring mountain, and here they found the first signs of those immense barrancas or deep ravines, worn into the steeps by the melting of snow for centuries.

The southern slope of Popocatepetl appeared to offer our travellers the easiest ascent, and, accordingly, having obtained three Indian guides from the Alcaldé, and an escort of two soldiers, for the wilds of the forest, they set forth on their perilous journey early on the morning of the 22nd of May. Their way led through a tangled wilderness of plants and trees. After passing a number of barrancas, the sides of which were covered with beautiful pines standing out in relief against the bright snows above them; and being compelled to cut a way through the matted forest with their swords and Indian axes, they reached, about noon, the rancho of Zacapalco. The owner was absent from home, but they found the extensive pasturages round his house filled with cattle, and protected by a guard from the wolves and lions with which the woods are infested. As there was no one in the dwelling to bid them welcome, they took the liberty to help themselves to the grazier's utensils, and dined most comfortably at the upland farm. The air was chilly and respiration had already become difficult.

After their meal they bade farewell to part of their company, and with the Indians and two servants, continued their upward course on horseback notwithstanding the increasing heaviness of the sand. In two hours they

attained the limit of vegetation, when they saw but a few pines—whose gnarled and twisted branches exhibited scarcely a sign of verdure. Some small singing birds flew by them, and the plants they had observed in the course of their ascent thus far, are mentioned in the subjoined note.*

At this spot our travellers found a wide desert of black volcanic sand, covered with fragments of pumice. They were soon warned of approaching difficulties. The clouds gathered in thick masses around the top of the volcano portending a storm; and, scarcely had they retreated again to their tent, when it came down on them with all the mercilessness of a tropical hurricane. For several hours during the ensuing night the surrounding wastes were lit up with incessant flashes of the most brilliant lightning, shooting from the clouds above and *below* them, and at times even streaming horizontally along the wastes of dreary sand, crashing the branches of the forest and rending the stoutest pines. They seemed enveloped in flame—yet they had no protection from the fury of this storm of hail and thunder but a scanty cloth, thrown over the limb of a tree and pegged to the ground!

Thus passed the night until four o'clock. When day dawned, they found the mountain covered with snow, and the summit entirely enveloped in clouds. Nevertheless they resolved to proceed, and, with the greatest difficulty, prevailed on the Indians to accompany them.

For a league and a half farther, they advanced on horseback, but the pathway became so deep and yielding in the sand, that they were forced to dismiss their servants with the animals, and continue with the guides alone. The toil of ascending on foot now commenced, and they describe it as one of the most agonizing they ever underwent; sliding back half the distance they had made in advance at every footstep, and laboring with the increased circulation to such a degree that they could scarcely breathe. Yet they persevered resolutely for several hours, until the ill-shod Indians, whose feet were cut by the snow and sands, gave out entirely, and the Baron and Mr. Von Gerolt were forced to proceed wholly unattended. It was about this time that the sun broke out from the clouds, for which (although they disregarded it then,) they paid dearly enough in the sequel.

At noon, after immense fatigue and exertions, they found themselves at

* Salvia, three species.
Baccharis, Cineraria, four species.
Acacia.
Céstrum, two species.
Asclepias, do. do.
Iresine, do. do.
Arbutus, do. do.
Eupatorium, do. do.
Hedyotis, three species.
Viburnum, do. do.
Corcopsis, do. do.
Mycosotis grandiflora, do. do.
do flor. alb. do. do.
Stachys, do. do.
Lobelia, three species.
Stevia, do. do.
Leonia-salvifolia, do. do.
Œnotera, do. do.
Fuchsia.
Achyrophorus roseus.
Those *nearest* the limit of vegetation were:
Chelone, gentianoides.
Amaryllis, minuta.
Phelia.
Castilleja.
Lupinus-vaginatus.
Ribes, odoratum.
Arenaria bryoides

the steep basaltic rock which is visible from Mexico, sticking like a thorn out of the volcano's side, and is called the Pico del Fraile—sixteen thousand eight hundred and ninety-five feet above the level of the sea—and apparently but a short distance from the summit of the cone.

Nevertheless, this was doomed to be the limit of their present enterprise. As soon as they had refreshed themselves by a little repose, they endeavored to trace a path upward from the rocks; but everything was covered with ice and snow. None of the ravines were bare, as usual at this season, when they are generally traversed by torrents on their way to the valley. All was a waste of cloud and frost.

In addition to these physical dangers—the day was far advanced; there was no place where they could be sheltered, or where they would not freeze to death during the night if they advanced. They had no food—and they were already wearied by an eight hours' march in a rarefied atmosphere. Disagreeable as was the alternative, it was resolved to retreat to the rancho, which they reached at sunset, suffering the most excruciating agony in their eyes and faces from the effects of the reflection of the sun from the brilliant snow.

After a night of pain and sleeplessness they returned next morning to Ozumba, whence they reached the Capital after a delay of a couple of days.

This unfortunate termination of their enterprise, however, did not dishearten them. In the following year they again undertook the ascent, and were accompanied on that occasion by Mr. Egerton, the distinguished artist, who was murdered last year at Tacubaya.

On the 28th of April, 1834, they departed early in the morning from the village of Ozumba, accompanied by three guides, two of whom were the brothers Paez, their companions of the previous year. They were now better prepared with comforts and necessaries for their journey, and, besides, had provided themselves with staves, some fifteen feet in length, shod with iron, to aid in leaping from rock to rock and steadying them on the slippery snow.

Reaching the limit of vegetation at three in the afternoon, they pitched their tents, lighted their camp-fires, and after making out the route for the next day, passed a few hours of comfort and repose. At two A. M., on the 29th, they were astir by moonlight, and continued the ascent for nearly an hour and a half on horseback, when, as on the former occasion, they were obliged by the heavy sands to dismount and proceed on foot. They were still, however, accompanied by the three guides and one servant, who bore their provisions and instruments. In this manner they advanced in the direction of the Pico del Fraile, veiling their faces, to protect their eyes and skin from the reflection by which they had been so much injured and annoyed last year; and thus they passed the broad belt of volcanic sand between the limits of vegetation and eternal snow.

At half-past seven the view was sublime. The immense plains and valleys were spread below them like a sea—and as the sun rose, the

gigantic shadows of the volcano lay over the western levels even to the distant horizon.

At half-past eight the party had attained the Pico—and in the shelter of the porphyrytic rock that shoots upward near two hundred feet, they made a slight and comfortable breakfast. But as no promises could induce the Indians to go farther, they were obliged to leave behind many of their most valuable instruments, and among them, a theodolite, with which they had designed making some interesting observations and experiments on the summit. They took, however, a barometer and a Daniell's hygrometer, and set out, accompanied by Mr. Egerton's servant, (a youth of eighteen) the only person who mustered courage to accompany them.

A spur of rocks which strikes upward from the Pico del Fraile impeded their progress in a direct line, and it became necessary to strike off eastwardly through a deep ravine formed by one side of this spur or crest, and a similar spur that descends in that direction from the summit. This ravine faces the south, and through its comparatively warmer bed the melting snows discharge themselves into the vale of Amilpas. They continued ascending over the bottom of the barranca at an angle of thirty-five degrees, finding but little snow, although the eternal limit of it was two or three thousand feet below them. After three hours of difficult and dangerous labor, on the sharp and slippery surface of the rocks, they reached the upper end of the gorge where it terminates in the solid lava forming the dome of the volcano. Thenceforward their path was constantly over snow, and, although they frequently sank through it up to their waists, they describe the difficulties as less than while passing the slippery rocks and sands of the washed barranca. Over these snows they zig-zagged for a while longer—stopping at almost every step to gather strength and breath, until, at half-past two, they stood upon the lofty summit.

Until that moment they had observed no symptoms of a crater;—but the vast gulf now burst upon them at once, yawning at their feet, filled with curling vapors that rose to near the edge and mingled with the clouds.

The highest point of the crater is described by Mr. Von Gerolt as lying to the westward, and the lowest to the east. Its shape is that of an irregular ellipse, the greatest diameter of which is between the NE. and SE. This he estimates to be nearly five thousand feet, while the shorter is about a thousand less, making the whole circumference of the crater, therefore, nearly a league. Its rough walls plunge to a depth of a thousand feet, and the bottom (although of the same shape) has not the same huge dimensions as the upper rim.

As the sun penetrated the lowest depths of the crater, our travellers distinctly saw its base, from which two fountains of sulphur constantly poured forth a whitish smoke that rested on the rocks of the steep walls, and deposited its residuum among the cracks and crannies. The base and sides appeared to be entirely crusted with sulphur, and they judged

that the narrower dimensions of the base are altogether owing to the immense accumulation of that material for centuries. On the upper edge of the crater, the snow—drifted by the winds—curled over the sharp ledges, but there were no indications of sulphur on the nearest rocks. Yet, in various parts of the rim, there were circular vents, from two to five inches in diameter, whence a sulphurous steam issued with a roaring sound, intermitting at intervals in strength and volume.

In order to examine these valves more closely, Mr. Von Gerolt descended about sixty feet into the crater, over masses of red porphyry. These contain much vitreous feldspar and approach the character of porous lava, while the immense wall of the opposite side seemed to be composed of different rock,—and, through the telescope, appeared in color of a violet gray, deposited in horizontal strata, resembling the material of the volcanic hill near Ayotla.

Our adventurers discovered no place by which they could reach the bottom of the crater, nor could they continue their examinations on the summit for any great length of time, as their sufferings were intense from the rarefaction of air, expansion of blood, a continual aching of their eyes and brows, and excessive debility. They conclude, from these facts, that the story related by Cortéz in his letters to Charles V., that Francisco del Montaño had descended into this gulf and "obtained sulphur from which they made their powder," is entirely inaccurate.

The silence at this immense height is described by Mr. Von Gerolt as "sepulchral," broken only at intervals by a subterraneous roar, like the sound of a distant cannonade, and the rattling of stones and masses of rock falling from the walls to the bottom of the crater. A similar sound is said to be frequently heard, even in the city of Mexico, in the direction of Popocatepetl. The frequent earthquakes that are felt in the Republic, heaving the whole land from the Gulf to the Pacific, from east to west, like the undulations of the sea, and manifesting themselves at all the points where there are indications of volcanic action on the surface, can only be accounted for by the hypothesis, that at a great depth, all these volcanoes (separated near their summits by transition and volcanic rock,) have a general communication over some vast central furnace, where the elements are in continual ferment.

It is related that, in the great earthquake of March, 1834, at half-past ten at night, the phenomenon was announced by regular oscillations of the earth from east to west, augmenting gradually until it became difficult to stand erect, while hundreds suffered as from the nausea of seasickness. The arches of the aqueduct, by which water is introduced into Mexico, (running in an *easterly* direction,) were split in their centres, while the one that comes from the *north* remained uninjured. This earthquake was experienced nearly at the same moment in Vera Cruz, St. Andres Tuxtla, Huatusco, (a village eight leagues from the volcano of Orizaba,) Jalapa and Puebla; but, singularly enough, it was *not felt three leagues north of Huatusco, or at a few leagues both north and*

south of the city of Mexico. Proceeding westward from the Capital, it was perceived again in Morelia, and it became so violent in the direction of Acapulco, that it destroyed houses, cracked the earth, and finally plunged into the sea, whose waves rose and swelled as under the influence of a violent storm. During its continuance of nearly five minutes, there were no meteoric phenomena worthy of note, no subterranean noise, and no perceptible change in the altitude of the barometer, in the city of Mexico.

Standing on the summit of Popocatepetl and looking over the immense panorama—which now lay spread like a map at his feet—Mr. Von Gerolt compared his repeated examinations of the geology of the valley and of the adjoining departments, and he came to the conclusion, that both the volcano and the vale owe their origin and present condition to some violent eruption, by which the actual surface has been raised from the interior to its present level, through the primitive and transition rocks; and that in the mining districts of the states of Puebla, Mexico and Michoacan, the rich veins, manifested in slaty formations, or in metallic porphyry, are but the trifling remains or islands, as it were, left rising above the plain, after the fiery deluge that swept over portions of our Continent.

But (turning to the prospect around them, from the examination of the crater of that vast stack, which pours forth the smoke and vapors of the central fires, and acts, perhaps, as the great safety-valve of a large part of the New World,) the travellers speak of the immense picture that lay before them as indescribably sublime.

The day was remarkably clear. Few clouds, and those very high in the air, appeared against the sky, which was almost black with the intensity of its azure; and, as far as the eye could reach, in every direction, there was one uninterrupted waving of mountain, valley and plain, until (almost without a horizon) the earth and the sky blent in vapory blueness. In the midst of the eastern plain, the tall cone of Orizaba stood up in bold relief against the sky, with its snowy peak glittering like a point of flashing steel. Below them, near two thousand feet, lay the summit of Iztaccihuatl, covered with snow, and exhibiting not the slightest evidence either of crater or volcanic action.

After enjoying this splendid panorama as long as their enfeebled condition would allow them, erecting a flag-staff, and making the sketch I have placed at the commencement of this letter;—the travellers, at four o'clock, began a descent, which they describe as not the least difficult portion of their enterprise. If they complained of the toilsome slowness of climbing, they could now with equal justice complain of the dangerous swiftness of their return. The day was far advanced; the cool wind of the evening had already frozen the surface that melted under the noonday sun, and, passing over the sands and snows at a sharp angle, they

were often violently precipitated either against masses of rocks, or to the very verge of precipices, from which they only saved themselves by the firmness of their nerves and the strength of their iron-shod staves. At length, however, after several very narrow escapes, they reached the limit of the forest, and in a few days returned to Mexico in excellent spirits.

By the failure of the Indians to ascend with them to the summit, they were unable to make many experiments, for which the great scientific acquirements of Mr. Von Gerolt so highly qualify him. In addition to this, the barometer, which had been slung on the back of Mr. Egerton's servant, was broken by a fall; so that (as far as measurements were concerned,) the expedition was entirely fruitless. I have, however, compiled from the notes of two other parties, the following statements, which are interesting, as affording the most accurate dimensions of this remarkable volcano:

Mr. BERBECK, who ascended on the 10th of November, 1837, gives the elevation of Popocatepetl, above the Valley of Mexico, at 10,382 feet.
Mexico is above Vera Cruz, according to Humboldt, - 7,470

Whole height of volcano above the sea, - - - 17,852

Mr. GLENNIE, who ascended 20th April, 1837, gives the elevation of Popocatepetl, above the Valley of Mexico, at - - 10,413 feet.
Mexico above Vera Cruz, according to Humboldt, - 7,470

17,883

By a series of observations, made at Vera Cruz in 1828, the opinion is, that the *true height* of Mexico above Vera Cruz, or in other words, *above the level of the sea*, is 7,548 feet, which, added to their elevations above the Valley of Mexico, will give us, for

Berbeck, - - - - - - - - - - - 17,930 feet.
Glennie, - - - - - - - - - - - 17,961
While Humboldt, (who gives his by trigonometrical observations,) - - - - - - - - - - 17,715

The limit of all vegetation, according to Glennie, is - 12,693
Pico del Fraile, - - - - - - - - - 16,895
Limit of *pines*, - - - - - - - - - 12,544

In November, 1827, the thermometer, *at the summit*, was 22° of Fahr. and in *April* of the same year, 33°.

At the limit of vegetation, Mr. Von Gerolt found, at 6 P. M., the precip: of moisture, by Daniell's hygrometer, 36° Fahr. on the interior thermometer; and at 50° in the atmosphere. Water boiled at 194° Fahr. Barometer, 19.12, English. Temperature, 48° Fahr. Corresponding observations, made in Mexico, gave 23.071 English inches, from which we deduce a height of - - - 5,144 English feet.
To which add - - - - - - - 7,548

12,692

which is within *one foot*, it will be perceived, of the height assigned to this spot by Mr. Glennie.

I present you with a sketch of the outline of the mountain, on which the different elevations are marked, so that the whole of these measurements will be at once mapped out before you.

OUTLINE OF POPOCATEPETL.*

* This is a difficult word to pronounce, but it is easy in comparison with many of the Indian words you may hear uttered every day in the markets of Mexico.

"Nothing," says Humboldt, "strikes the Europeans more in the Aztec, Nahuatl, or Mexican language, than the excessive length of the words. This length does not always depend on their being compounded, as in the Greek, the German, and the Sanscrit, but on the manner of forming the substantive, the plural, or the superlative. A kiss is called *tetennamiquiliztli*; a word formed from the verb *tennamiqui*, to embrace, and the additive particles *te* and *liztli*. In the same manner we have *tlatolona*, to ask, and *tetlatolaniliztli*, a demand: *tlayhiouiltia*, to torment, and *tetlayhiouiltiliztli*, torment. To form the plural, the Aztecs in several words double the first syllable; as *mixtli*, a cat; *mimixtin*, cats; *tochtli*, a rabbit: *totochtin*, rabbits. *Tin* is the termination which indicates the plural. Sometimes, the duplication is made in the midst of a word; for instance, *ichpechtli*, a girl; *ichpopochtin*, girls: *telpochtli*, a boy; *telpopochtin*, boys. The most remarkable example I have met with of a real composition of words, is found in the word *amatlaculolitquitcatiaztlaauilli*, which signifies, the reward-given-to-the-messenger-who-carries-a-paper-on-which-is-painted-tidings. This word, which forms by itself an Alexandrian line, contains *amatl*, paper (of the agave;) *cuiloa*, to paint, or trace hieroglyphics; and *tlaztlahuilli*, the wages or salary of a workman." The word *notlazomahuiztzepizcatatzin*, which signifies, venerable-priest-whom-I-cherish-as-my-father, is used by the Mexicans in addressing the priests. In the Aztec language, the letters B, D, F, G, and R, are wanting."—HUMBOLDT's *Researches*, vol. ii. p. 246. *Pol. Essay* vol. i. p. 139.

JOURNAL OF AN EXCURSION TO

TEZCOCO,

THE PYRAMIDS OF TEOTIHUACAN,

THE HILL OF TEZCOSINGO,

&c. &c. &c.

I LEFT Mexico on the seventh of October, with some friends, to visit the ancient city of TEZCOCO, and the PYRAMIDS OF ST. JUAN TEOTIHUACAN. There are two routes; one by the road around the southern margin of the lake, and another by the Indian canoes across the lake itself. We selected the latter, and rendezvoused at the gate of San Lazaro, where the canal enters the city. There was some difficulty in finding a boat, as we had delayed beyond the hour when the vessels usually leave the city, on their return to Tezcoco; but L——, who was well acquainted with the neighborhood, beat up the usual haunts of the Indians about the pulqué shops, and, by dint of persuasion and *clacos*, induced a couple of stout rowers to launch their vessel.

In half an hour we found ourselves on board a flat-bottomed scow, under an awning of mats stretched over saplings, and reclining at full length on the bedding with which we had luckily provided ourselves, against the wants of Tezcoco.

For nearly a mile from the city gate, the canal leads through a tangled marsh, tenanted exclusively by mosquitos. The stings of the annoying insects were not idle on our skins, and I scarcely ever suffered so much as in reaching the waters of the lake through these foul and desolate fens. We, however, soon found our way out of them, stopping for a moment at the Peñon Viejo, a small volcanic hill or pustule rising from the plain,

where there are warm baths,* and the remains of some ancient sculpture, of no great significance.

On attaining the lake itself, the view was exceedingly beautiful. The expanse is a clear and noble sheet, reflecting on its calm bosom every hill and mountain of the valley, while to the north (where it unites with San Cristoval) the lakes and horizon are blended. Yet it is singular, that, sounding in the deepest central part of the lake, we obtained *but two feet and a half of water!* The boatmen *poled* the entire distance of twelve miles, and on every side we saw fishermen wading along in the lake, pushing their boats as they loaded them with fish, or gathered the "flies' eggs" from the tall weeds and flags, that are planted in long rows as nests for the insects. These eggs (called *agayacatl*) were a favorite food of the Indians long before the conquest, and, when baked in *patés*, are not unlike the roe of fishes, both in flavor and appearance. After *frogs* in France, and "*bird nests*" in China, I think they may be esteemed quite a delicacy, and I find that they are not despised even at fashionable tables in the Capital.

Father Gage, at page 111 of his Travels, says that "at one season of the year, the Indians had nets of mail, with the which they raked off a certain *dust* that is bred on the water of the lake of Mexico, and is kneaded together like unto *oas* of the sea. They gathered much of this and kept it in heaps, and made thereof cakes like unto brick-bats. And they did not only sell this ware in the market, but also sent it abroad to other fairs and markets afar off; and they did eat this meal, with as good a stomach as we eat cheese; yea, and they hold the opinion, that this scum of fatness of the water is the cause that such great number of fowl cometh to the lake, which in the winter season is infinite."

This was written early in the seventeenth century, and "*infinite*" still continues to be the number of wild fowl with which these lakes and the neighboring marshes are covered during the winter. I have elsewhere said, that the plains and the waters seem actually *peppered* with them.

There can of course be but little skill in sporting among such clouds of birds, and the consequence is that they are slain for the market, by persons who rent the best situated shooting-grounds from the proprietors of the

* According to Humboldt, (Pol. Essay, vol. ii. p. 188.) There are two sources of mineral waters in the Valley of Mexico; one at Guadalupe, the other at the Peñon. Those waters contain carbonic acid, sulphate of lime and of soda, and muriate of soda. The temperature of the waters at the Peñon is quite high.

At this place the Indians, also, make *salt*.

"Of the five lakes of the Valley of Mexico, the lake of Tescoco is most impregnated with muriate and carbonate of soda. The nitrate of barytes proves that this water contains no sulphate in solution. The purest and most limpid water is that of the lake of Xochimilco, the specific weight of which I found to be 1.0018, when that of water distilled at the temperature of 54° Fahr. was 1.000, and water from the lake of Tescoco was 1.0125. The water of this last mentioned lake is consequently heavier than that of the Baltic sea, and not so heavy as that of the ocean, which, under different latitudes, has been found between 1.0269 and 1.0285. The quantity of sulphuretted hydrogen which is detached from the surface of the Mexican lakes, and which the acetate of lead indicates in great abundance in the lakes of Tescoco and Chalco, undoubtedly contributes in certain seasons to the unhealthiness of the air in the valley. However, the fact is curious, that intermittent fevers are very rare on the banks of these lakes, the surface of which is partly hidden by rushes and aquatic herbs.—*Vide* HUMBOLDT—*et* MOD. TRAVELLER, vol. vi. p. 251.

lake margins. The gunners erect a sort of infernal machine, with three *tiers* of barrels—one, level with the marsh or water, another slightly elevated, and the third at a still greater angle. The lower tier is discharged at the birds while they are sitting, and this of course destroys a multitude; but as some must necessarily escape the first discharge, the second and third tiers are fired in quick succession, and it is rare indeed that a duck avoids the wholesale slaughter. From 125,000 to 200,000 annually load the markets of Mexico, and form the cheapest food of the multitude; but it is rare that you can procure one delicate enough to bring to your table.

* * * * * *

It was near four o'clock, when, under the slow impulse of our *polers*, we approached the eastern border of the lake. The shores were dotted with white-walled haciendas and lines of beautiful groves, while at the distance of a few miles, in the interior, rose the lofty sierra, in the midst of which, the mountain of Tlaloc, "the god of Storms," was brewing a heavy thunder-storm. The clouds were thickly gathered around the top of the mountain, and as we disembarked on the waste-like quay, among sands and marshes, the first premonitory drops began to patter on our hats. Here we had expected to find a carriage, or at least horses, waiting to convey us the remaining league to the town of Tezcoco. But as we did not arrive by the early boats of the morning, our friends had returned home, presuming that we had relinquished our proposed expedition.

While our baggage was landing from the boat, the rain increased rapidly. There was no place for shelter, except an open shed occupied by the boatmen during the day. Thunder and lightning were soon added to the storm; and yet, in the midst of these accumulated discomforts, we took up our line of march, as the prospect of remaining was worse than the danger of a drenching. None of the Indians could be bought or bribed to leave their boats and carry our luggage, nor were there any idlers about, willing to earn an honest penny as porters. I therefore put on my serape, and the oil-skin cover of my hat; and fastening my valise by a handkerchief on my back, balanced it (*aguador* fashion, in front,) by my gun and sword,—and thus set forth for a dreary tramp over the lonely waste.

As we advanced, the rain and tempest of wind, thunder and lightning, increased, and I have no recollection, in the course of my travels, of a more disagreeable pilgrimage than the one we made to Tezcoco. Our anxiety was greatly increased by the loss of one of our party in the darkness among some morasses, and by the rise of a considerable stream that crossed the road near the town. We however waded the brook, and, about eight o'clock, arrived at the hospitable dwelling of an American, who, after wandering about the world in various capacities, has settled down in the city of Tezcoco, where (from his connection with an extensive menagerie, that once astonished the Mexicans with its lions and monkeys,) he passes by the significant cognomen of "*El de las fieras.*"

A kindlier heart, however, exists not on earth; and to him and to his Mexican wife, I am indebted for many a pleasant hour, beguiled by the exquisite music of the one, and the story of wild adventure of the other.

TEZCOCO.

8th October. We rose early. Every symptom of yesterday's storm was swept from the sky—a clear and beautiful day, mild as our June.

After breakfast we sallied forth to make arrangements for our journey to Teotihuacan, but found that the person who was to furnish us with horses had gone on a bull-catching expedition to a neighboring hacienda. Finding it, therefore, impossible to make any excursions to the neighborhood to-day, we amused ourselves by strolling over the town and seeing all that is interesting in the way of antiquarian research.

At the period of the conquest, Tezcoco was the second city of the Mexican Empire; and what it must have been in splendor and vastness, may be judged from the account I have heretofore given of the Capital itself. Situated, then, on the borders of the lake, (the spot from which Cortéz launched his brigantines when he invested Mexico by water,) it perhaps resembled Pisa both in power and importance; but every trace of its former magnificence has disappeared, and it has dwindled to scarcely more than a respectable village, where a few herdsmen, fishermen, and farmers have gathered together for mutual protection and traffic. The large Plaza is silent and deserted—the people loll about their shops and houses as on a holyday—a universal quietude rests over the whole town—and a general listlessness seems to prevail both in regard to the present and the future.*

I was particularly struck with one bad feature in the character of the Tezcocans—a disregard for their dead. In passing through the western portion of the town we came to the parish church, which was being repaired. On entering the square in front of it, I stumbled against a human skull; a little farther on, I found the niches in the walls filled with them;—the floor of the edifice was taken up, and the dead-pits had been cleaned and scraped, yet the remains of the human frame were still plenteously scattered over the bottom, and the stench was intolerable. The whole surface of the yard was strewn with ribs and thigh bones—lower jaws—teeth—and fragments of skulls, and a huge pile of *rich, black mould, mottled with human bones, was thrown in a corner—the contents of the pits within.*

* When Cortéz entered the city of Tezcoco, on the last day of the year 1520, the nobles came out to meet him, and conducted him to one of the Palaces of the late King Nezahualcojotl, which was large enough, according to the Conqueror, "*to contain not only the six hundred Spaniards who were lodged in it, but many more.*"—CLAVIGERO, Book x., vol. 2, p. 139.

ANCIENT BAS RELIEF.

PYRAMIDS.

In the northwestern corner of Tezcoco is a pile of earth, bricks, mortar and pottery, entirely shapeless, and covered with a field of aloes; on the top of this I found several very large slabs of basalt, squared with the chisel and laid due north and south. Tradition says, that these are the remains of the PALACE OF MONTEZUMA.

On this spot, some years ago, the small fragment represented in the opposite drawing was found, and immediately transferred to the collection of the Conde del Peñasco, in Mexico, where it is now preserved.

It appears to be the remains of a trough or basin, and the sculpture is neatly executed in relief. I imagine that it was designed to represent a conflict between a serpent and bird, and you cannot fail to remark the *cross* distinctly carved near the lower right-hand corner of the vessel.

At the southern end of the town, there are still distinctly traceable three immense pyramids, the forms of which are not so much obliterated as might be supposed after the lapse of centuries. They lie in a line with each other from north to south—are about four hundred feet in extent on each side of their bases, and are built partly of *adobes* and partly of large *burned bricks* and fragments of pottery. In many places I discovered remains of a thick covering of *cement*, through which small canals or gutters had been formed to carry off the water, or, perhaps, the blood, from the upper terrace. The sides of these pyramids were strewn with fragments of idols, clay vessels, and obsidian knives. It is related by Bernal Diaz del Castillio, that the great temple of Tezcoco was ascended by one hundred and seventeen steps; and it is probable that one of these pyramids was the base of the Teocalli to which the historian alludes.

These were all the antiquities I could find in the town of Tezcoco, except the spot where tradition says that Cortéz launched his vessels. It still passes by the name of "*Puente de los Bergantines*," and is now probably rather more than a mile in a direct line from the lake.

While I was in Mexico a most interesting piece of antiquity was sent from Tezcoco to General Tornel, and presented by him to Mr. Morphy, an opulent English merchant, who has since returned to England. It was a group, modelled in clay, about a foot and a half high, representing a sacrifice, and consisted of two figures—the priest and the victim. The latter (a female) had been thrown over a tall and narrow stone; the priest had just made a deep incision in her back—torn out her heart—and was in the act of offering it to the idol. The expressions of death and agony in the countenance of the woman—and of pride and enthusiasm in the priest, were admirably rendered. I intended making a drawing of this group, but Mr. Morphy sent it to the coast for shipment immedi-

ately after its reception, and I scarcely regret the occurrence now, as one of the best antiquarians of Mexico cast considerable doubt on its genuineness. It is the fashion here, as in Italy, to manufacture antiquities by the gross, and it requires a keen eye to detect the imposture.

As we left the Pyramids of Tezcoco, after our morning's examination, we were beset by several of the burghers who professed to sell large collections of interesting fragments and statues. Among these worthies was an old Indian who lived directly opposite the largest of the pyramids, and spent his leisure hours in groping among the ruins. We accompanied them, one after the other, to their houses, but found scarcely anything worthy of purchase except a few small idols of *serpentine*, and some personal ornaments cut from an exceedingly hard and brittle stone. As to the Indian—his idols were the dolls of all his progeny, and had been pounded about the yard of his mud hovel for so many years, that their features were entirely obliterated.

* * * * *

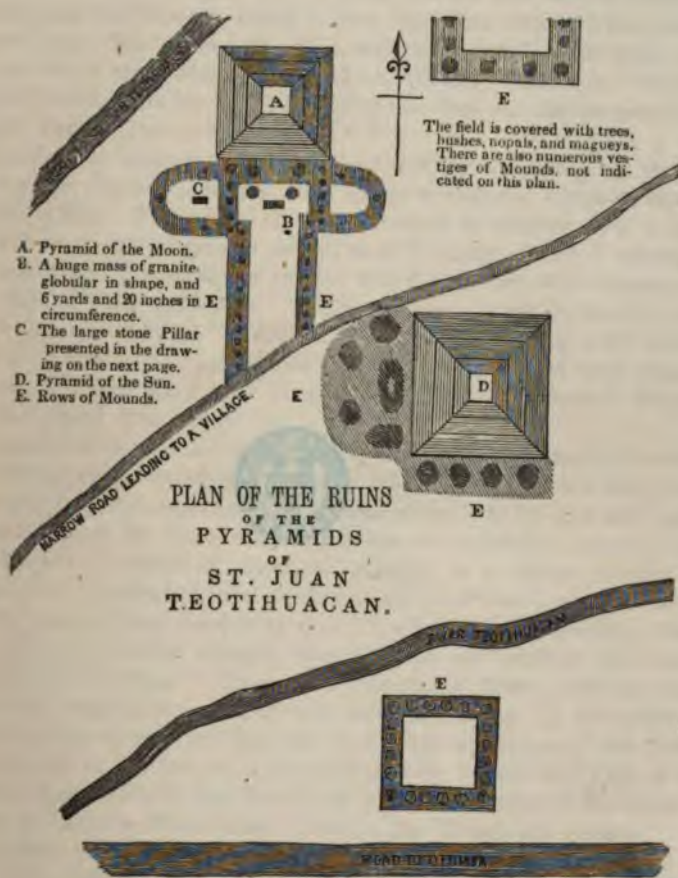
In the evening, the person who was to be our guide in the neighborhood, came into town and immediately visited us. I found him to be an honest, open-hearted, rollicking fellow; who passed his time in catching cattle—looking after a small *milpa*, or corn-field—and hunting in the neighboring mountains. His hands and face were scarred by his numerous encounters with the beasts; yet before he left us he made one of the girls of the family tune her guitar, and leading out another, danced a *fandango*, while he chanted a song in a *patois* that I could not understand, but which seemed highly amusing from the merriment of the company.

9th October.—Sunday. A night passed in *fleadom!* We were, consequently, abroad early—and the day was beautiful. At half-past nine we were in our saddles, and on our way to the

PYRAMIDS OF ST. JUAN TEOTIHUACAN.

On leaving the town our road lay in a northeasterly direction, through a number of picturesque villages buried in foliage, and fenced with the *organ cactus*, lifting its tall pillar-like stems to a height of twenty feet above the ground. The country was rolling, and we passed over several elevations and a stream or two before we turned suddenly to the right, and saw the village of St. Juan with an extensive level beyond it, bordered on all sides by mountains, except toward the east, where a deep depression in the chain leads into the plains of Otumba. In the centre of this level are the Pyramids of Teotihuacan, and the opposite engra-

PYRAMIDS OF ST. JUAN TEOTIHUACAN.—WESTERN VIEW.


A
B
C
D
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E
A. Pyramid of the Moon.
B. A huge mass of granite globular in shape, and 6 yards and 20 inches in circumference.
C. The large stone Pillar presented in the drawing on the next page.
D. Pyramid of the Sun.
E. Rows of Mounds.
The field is covered with trees, bushes, nopals, and magueys. There are also numerous vestiges of Mounds, not indicated on this plan.
NARROW ROAD LEADING TO A VILLAGE

PLAN OF THE RUINS OF THE PYRAMIDS OF ST. JUAN TEOTIHUACAN.

ving will give you an accurate idea of their position and present appearance from this point.

After we passed through the village, the high-road was soon lost among paths leading between the walled fields of Indian farmers. At short distances, as we advanced in the direction of the pyramids, I observed evident traces of a well made ancient road, covered with several inches of a close and hard cement, which, in turn, was often overlaid with a foot or two of soil. We crossed the plain, and, in a quarter of an hour, stood at the foot of the *Tonatiuh Ytzagual*, or, "House of the Sun," the base line of which is six hundred and eighty-two feet, and the perpendicular height, two hundred and twenty-one.*

There is no other description of these monuments to be given than by saying that *they are pyramids, three stories or stages of which are yet distinctly visible.* The whole of their exteriors is covered with a thick growth of *nopals* or prickly pears; and, in many places, I discovered the remains of the coating of cement with which they were incrusted in the days of their perfection. A short distance, northwestwardly, from the "House of the Sun," is the *Metzli Ytzagual*, or "House of the Moon," with a height of one hundred and forty-four feet. On the level summits of both of these, there were erected, no doubt, the shrines of the gods and the places of sacrifice.

I ascended, clambering among the bushes and loose stones with uncertain footing, to the top of the "House of the Sun." The view from it was exceedingly picturesque over the cultivated fields to the east and south. Immediately to the south were a number of mound-like clusters, running toward a number of elevations arranged in a square, beyond the streamlet of *Teotihuacan*, and bordering the road that leads to Otumba. On the western front there were also five or six tumuli extending toward a long line of similar mounds, running from the southern side of the "House of the Moon." These lines were quite distinct, and the whole plain was more or less covered with heaps of stones. It is extremely probable, that at one time they all formed the sepulchres of the distinguished men of the Empire, and constituted the *Micoatl* or "Path of the Dead"—a name which they bore in the ancient language of the country. It was perhaps the Westminster Abbey of the Toltecs and Aztecs.

You will, however, obtain a much better idea of the arrangement of these pyramids and smaller tumuli by reference to the opposite plan, made some years since by a scientific friend of mine, and compared by me with the remaining ruins on the spot, in 1842.

An examination of the "House of the Moon," or lesser pyramid, affords no more information to the inquirer than the "House of the Sun." Like its neighbor, it is a mass of stones, rocks and cement; but, within a few years past, an entrance has been discovered between the second and third terraces, leading through a narrow passage, that may be traversed on hands and knees on an inclined plane for about twenty-five feet, to

* Gkunia.

two walled chambers, or sinks, like wells;—one of which has a depth of about fifteen feet, and the other rather less. The walls of the entrance and of the sinks are of the common adobe, and there are no remains either of sculpture, painting, or human bodies, to reward the groper through the dark and dusty adit. I could perceive no sign of an entrance in the "House of the Sun."

It is useless to inquire into the antiquity of these pyramids. There is no authentic tradition of their builders, although they are usually referred to the Toltecs. Clavigero* is very brief in his remarks in regard to them, but says that in the temples dedicated to the Sun and Moon, there were two idols of huge bulk carved of stone and covered with gold. The breast of the idol of the Sun was grooved out, and a massive image of the planet, in solid gold, was fixed in the hollow. Of this the conquerors immediately possessed themselves, while the idol was destroyed by order of the Bishop of Mexico, and the fragments remained in the neighborhood until the end of the seventeenth century. A huge globular mass of granite at the spot indicated on the *plan* by the letter B—measuring nineteen feet and eight inches in circumference—may probably be either part of its ruins, or the sacrificial stone upon whose convex surface thousands have been offered to the gods.

A short distance west of this ball, at the place marked with the letter C, in the middle of the small semicircular elevation of ground and stones, (on the top of which are three tumuli with five more on its eastern base,) is the curious stone of which the following is an exact design.

* Vol. i, p. 236 and 238

It lies due east and west, and is ten feet six inches in length by five feet in breadth. The material is granite, and though the sculpture on the northern and upper sides is very faint, yet, on the side facing the south, it is quite as distinct as represented in the drawing. The dark shade B is a hollow, three inches deep at the sides, and six at the top and bottom. In looking at this stone one might imagine that it had been a pillar, thrown down accidentally on its side; but the *exact east and west position—precisely in the centre of the group of tumuli*—would seem to forbid such an idea. It is said, that all who sit or recline on this singular fragment are immediately seized with a fainting fit; and, although we had heard of this remarkable property of the relic, we forgot to test the truth of it.

Clavigero tells us, that in the principal temple of Teotihuacan there dwelt constantly four priests, who were remarkable for the virtue and austerity of their lives. Their dress was of the most ordinary stuffs, and their food was confined to a loaf of maize, weighing two ounces, and a cup of *atollé* or gruel of the same grain.

Every night two of these devotees kept watch—offering incense, singing hymns to the gods, and shedding their blood on the stones of the temple. Their fastings and vigils continued for four years, except during a monthly festival, when they were permitted to indulge in as much food as they desired; but, while preparing for this enjoyment, they were obliged to undergo additional mortifications. At the end of four years they retired from the temple, and an equal number supplied their places, to go through the same rites and sufferings—and, in honor thereof, to receive the same homage and respect both from the people and their sovereign.

But high as was the recompense of their virtues, the punishment of vice, or of a violation of chastity, was proportionably severe. If the crime was proved after strict investigation, the culprit was beaten to death—his body burned—and his ashes scattered to the winds.

* * * * *

TRADITION.

There is a singular tradition in regard to the reappearance of the Sun l Moon after the regeneration and multiplication of the human race, ch I will here recount to you.

mecihuatl—the wife of the god Ometeuctli—after having borne many dren in heaven, happened once to bring forth a *knife of flint*, which nraged offspring flung to earth—when lo! from its fragments, sprang en hundred *heroes!* Immediately they petitioned their mother to them power to create men for their servants. But she disdained to er children, and sent them to the god of Hell, who, she declared, furnish them with *a bone of one of the men* who had perished in the l destruction of the races. This fragment she ordered them to

sprinkle with their blood, and a human pair should spring from it to regenerate the species.

Xolotl, one of the heroes, departed on the dangerous errand, and having obtained the gift from the infernal deity, hastened off precipitately in fear that he might repent the present. So rapidly did he return to earth, that in his speed he accidentally fell and *broke the bone!* Nevertheless, he returned to his brothers with the fragments, and, placing them in a vessel, sprinkled the precious relics with blood drawn from their bodies. On the fourth day there appeared a boy; and, after a lapse of three days more—during which the bloody sprinklings were continued—a girl was formed. They were reared by their guardian Xolotl with the milk of thistles—and thus commenced the regeneration of the world!

But there was no Sun nor Moon! The luminaries that existed in former days had been extinguished in the general ruin.

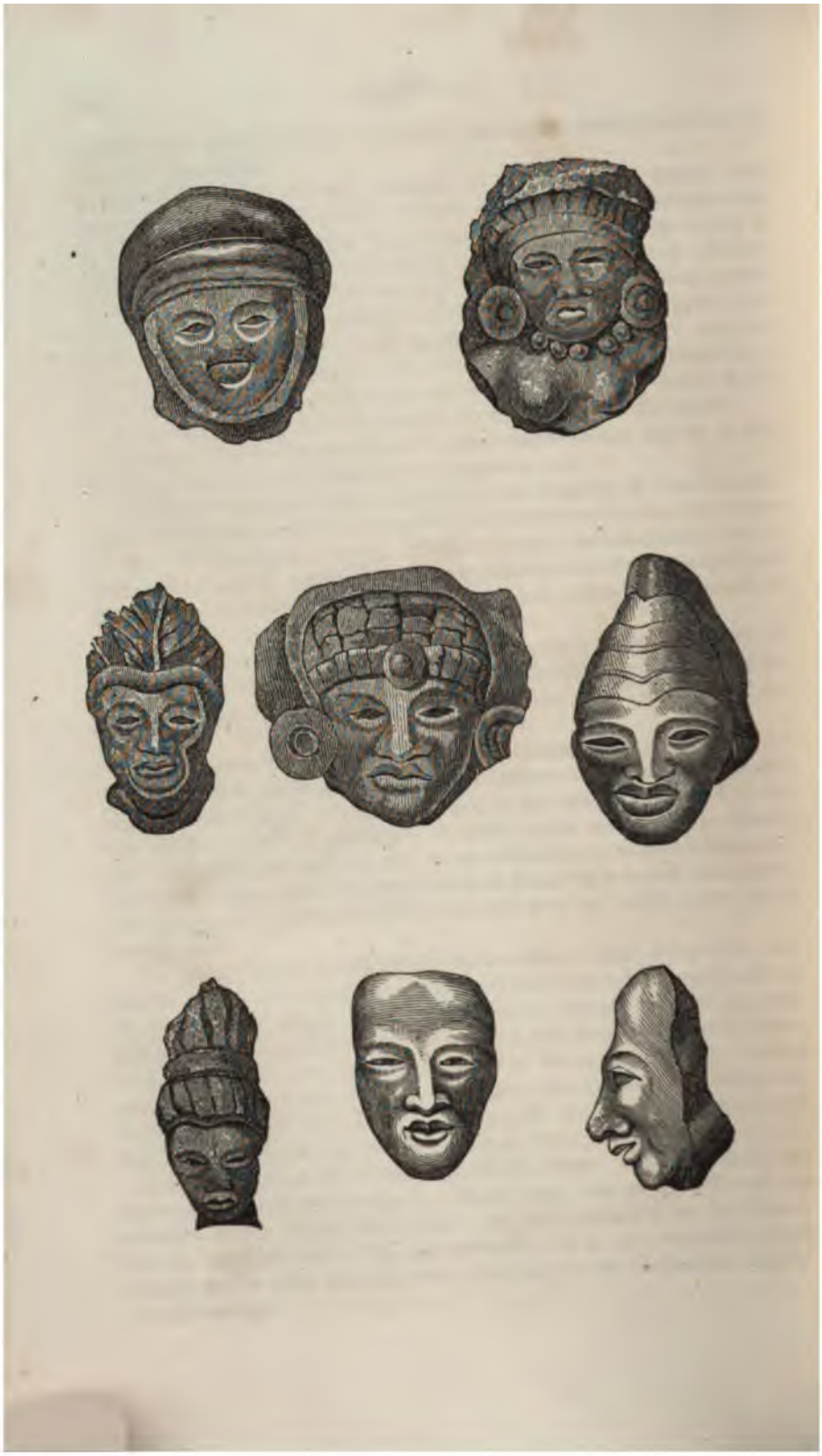
The heroic brothers, therefore, assembled on the plain of Teotihuacan. They built a huge pile, and, kindling it, declared that the first who threw himself into the flames should have the glory to be transformed into a SUN. Nanahuatzin, the boldest of the multitude, immediately leaped into the blaze and descended to hell. After a short period, the Sun rose in the east!

But scarcely had he appeared above the horizon when he stopped in his course. They sent a message to the Orb desiring him to continue his travels, but he politely declined doing so until he should *see them all put to death!*

This, as may well be imagined, was anything but agreeable to the band of sixteen hundred, and not a few undertook to manifest their displeasure very openly. One seized his bow and shot an arrow, which the Sun safely avoided by *dodging!* Another made an equally passionate and fruitless demonstration; and, so on with several, until the luminary, tired of the sport, and somewhat annoyed, flung back one of the arrows, and fixed it in the forehead of the first hero who had rashly aimed at his blazing disc.

The heroic brothers, intimidated by the fate of their companion, and unable to cope with the Orb, resolved to yield to his behests and to die by the hands of the daring Xolotl; who, after slaying all his relatives, committed suicide. Before the heroes perished, they bequeathed their clothes to their servants; and, even at the period of the conquest, many "*ancient garments*" were preserved by the Mexicans with singular veneration, under the belief that they were the dying gifts of the valiant heroes, who had restored the lost Sun for the comfort of their race.

A similar fable is told of the origin of the Moon. Before the final sacrifice of the 1600, another person of the same assemblage followed the example of his brother Nanahuatzin, and threw himself into the flames. But the strength of the fire had declined, and as the voluntary victim burned with a paler flame, he was glorified only by the humbler dignity of a *Moonship!*



*On the plain which had been the scene of this wonderful incantation and miraculous result, the descendants of the race consecrated two temples to the Sun and Moon, and the pyramids I have just described were, doubtless, the bases of their shrines and altars.**

* * * * *

It was late when we turned our horses' heads homeward, from the pyramids. At the base of that of the Moon, I met several old Indians who brought me a number of obsidian sacrificial knives, and small heads of a finely tempered clay, of which the opposite figures are specimens. They have evidently never been attached to bodies, and their purposes are entirely unknown by the Mexican antiquarians, although they have hitherto been discovered in great quantities at the foot of these Teocallis.

As we were just departing, an old woman lugged from beneath her petticoat a singular box of mottled marble, divided into four compartments, and covered on its exterior with very elaborate carving. The figures appeared to be those of Spaniards, and, in one place, there was a symbol resembling the cross. She said it had been dug up in an old field by her husband, when planting his last year's crop. Having purchased it for a dollar, it was forthwith deposited in the folds of a serape on my pillion, with the sonorous title of "*Montezuma's inkstand!*"

We rode merrily home, and reached Tezcoco by a brilliant moonlight, meeting troops of Indians returning from their Sunday's frolic in the town. As we passed through the numerous corn-fields with which the road-side is bordered, we heard the loud crack of the *milperos'* whip, as, seated on his high perch in the midst of the acres, he waved it, during the whole night, *in terrorem*, over the flocks of robber black-birds that infest the neighborhood as the grain is ripening.

VIATICUM AND FUNERAL RITES.

10*th October.—Monday.* An idle day, as Tio Ignacio, (as he is familiarly called,) was unable to accompany us to Tezcosingo.

Last night a young woman died in the house next to us, and her body is exposed to-day on a bier, surrounded with flowers and candles, in the entrance of the dwelling, so that it may be seen by every passer.

Approaching death, and the funeral services, are matters of considerable pomp in Mexico with almost all classes—and, especially, with the rich.

* Vide McCulloh, 229, 230, 231.

In April last, Madame Santa Anna, the wife of the President, was dangerously ill, and on the 19th of the month her life was in imminent peril. Early in the morning it was rumored that she was to receive the last sacrament, and, in all probability, would not survive the service. About noon, notes of invitation were sent from the Foreign Office to all the members of the Diplomatic Corps, requesting their presence at the ceremony of the *Viaticum*; and at seven o'clock we repaired, in uniform, to the Palace, where we were provided with massive wax torches, and ranged round the walls of the audience-chamber with the invited citizens, strangers, and friends of the suffering lady.

It was already quite dark. Presently the large bell of the Cathedral began to toll mournfully; and, being near a window overlooking the great square, I could perceive a solemn procession, with torches, issue from the door of the sacred edifice, preceded by a military band performing appropriate music. Slowly it advanced to the Palace gates—the jewelled robes of the Archbishop and attendant priests, flashing in the blaze of a thousand lights, as they approached the portals. They mounted the steps; entered the apartment; and, as the prelate passed through, chanting a hymn, the crowd knelt to the sacred elements. The Cabinet Ministers and Chiefs of the army then accompanied the priests into the chamber of the lady, where the required functions were performed. Returning again, through our saloon, they issued into the square, and, after making a tour around it, entered the Cathedral. The effect of this procession—with its torches blazing in the night like so many diamonds—its solemn military music, and its melancholy hymn—was solemn and picturesque.

There was a similar display (though not with so much magnificence,) at the death of General Moran, ex-Marquis of Vivanco. His dwelling was directly opposite my hotel, and I saw the whole of the preparations for his funeral from the windows.

Having been a patriotic soldier in his day, the Government undertook the arrangement of the last rites in his honor, and he was escorted by the flower of the troops.

His body was embalmed by the process of Ganal. It was laid on an open bier, dressed in the full uniform of a Major-general, with boots, spurs, plumed hat, sword, and even the cane by his side, as is usual with Spanish officers. So perfectly had the operation been performed on the body, that it presented in these equipments, a horrid and unnatural mockery of sleep; nor shall I ever forget the stony gaze of the *glass eyes*, as the dead body of the General issued from his gate-way.

To the sound of solemn music the procession moved along the streets of Espiritu Santo and San Francisco, toward the great church near the Alameda. The bier was placed on a lofty catafalque before the altar, hung with black velvet and lighted with tapers. A solemn service was performed with every aid of ecclesiastical splendor—and a multitude of

priests, in the different chapels, immediately commenced their masses for the repose of the hero's soul. At dark, his body was left with watchers around the pile on which it reposed, and, in a few days, it was deposited in an oaken sarcophagus and carried to a favorite hacienda for interment.

TEZCOSINGO.

11*th October.* Another fine day. After breakfast we started on our promised expedition to the hill of Tezcosingo—which rises in a tall cone at the end of the eastern plain, jutting out for a mile or two from the wall of mountains.

Tio Ignacio accompanied us on this occasion, and proved an excellent guide over the country. By his free, bold, dashing manners, and consummate courage, he has managed to obtain a remarkable control over all the neighboring Indians, and appears to be a person likely to make himself obeyed. He took an active part in the Revolution, and, as we rode from the town, pointed out to me the spot where, during a sudden night-attack of a guerilla party, he had been chased by a band of troopers from whom he was alone saved by the swiftness of his horse. It seems, however, that one of the cavalry, more daring than the rest, continued the pursuit after his companions had retreated;—but he paid dearly for his rashness in the end.

When Ignacio had cleared the streets and the suburbs of Tezcoco, he suddenly turned on his follower, and striking off at right-angles, dexterously threw his lasso over the trooper. In a moment he had dismounted his pursuer;—and putting his animal into full gallop, dragged the wretch for more than a mile over the plain, and cast his mangled body into a barranca!

THROWING THE LASSO.

* * * * *

As we trotted over the league of level ground that intervened between the town and hill, this story of the "tio"* brought out some of the revolutionary recollections of one of our party. I will record a couple of these illustrating the jugglery of the chiefs, and the controlling superstitious power of the priesthood over the mass of insurgent Indians.

It is related that HIDALGO, the celebrated priestly leader of the Revolutionary movement, was accustomed to travel from village to village preaching a crusade against the Spaniards, and exciting the *Creoles* and Indians; and one of his most effective tricks is said to have been the following. Although he had thrown off the cassock for the military coat, he wore a figure of the Virgin Mary suspended by a chain around his neck. After haranguing the mob on such occasions, he would suddenly break off, and looking down at his breast, address himself to the holy image, after the following fashion:—"Mary! Mother of God! Holy Virgin! Patron of Mexico! behold our country,—behold our wrongs,—behold our sufferings! Dost thou not wish they should be changed? that we should be delivered from our tyrants? that we should be free? that we should slay the *Guachupines?* that we should kill the Spaniards?"

The image had a moveable head fastened to a spring, which he jerked by a cord concealed beneath his coat, and, of course, the Virgin responded with a *nod!* The effect was immense—and the air was filled with Indian shouts of obedience to the present *miracle*.

* * * * *

During the heat of the insurrection, it was deemed necessary, upon a certain occasion, to execute a priest; and the officer in command of the party ordered a common soldier to lead the *padre* to a neighboring ditch, and dispatch him with a bullet.

The soldier peremptorily refused, declaring that it was unlawful for him to kill a "servant of God." The officer threatened him with instant death if he persisted in his refusal; but the soldier continued firm. The Captain then turned to the priest, ordered him to "*receive the confession of the soldier on the spot,*" and then sent both to the ditch, where they were murdered together!

He who writes the secret history of the Mexican Revolt, will have to record a story of blood, crime and superstition, unequalled in the annals of the world.

* * * * *

* "Tio," or uncle, is a familar mode of addressing intimates in the country.

At the village of Huejutla there are some interesting remains of the ancient Indians. A large ruined wall, about twenty-five feet in height and five or six in thickness, is pointed out as part of a palace, and terminates, to the eastward, on the steeps of a barranca. This barranca is crossed by an ancient arched bridge, which we neglected visiting. The most interesting, and certainly the most picturesque, antique in the vicinity, is a noble row of seventeen olive trees, in an inclosure near the church, alleged to have been planted by the conquerors.

We stopped at the house of an Alcaldé in the village of Natividad, to procure an Indian guide, who had promised his services to aid Ignacio in discovering certain fossil remains that lay on the edges of the mountains to the eastward; but, after waiting a considerable length of time, neither Ignacio nor the Indian appeared, and we determined to proceed alone toward Tezcosingo, under the escort of L——, who professed to be well acquainted with the hill and its antiquities.

The conical mountain rose out of the plain directly north of us; but in order to reach its base, we were obliged to descend a ravine three or four hundred feet in depth, and to ascend afterward along cliffs and herbage like those that opposed us on our journey to Xochicalco. At length we gained the foot of the mountain, and commenced a zig-zag ascent to the eastward among *nopals* and rocks that seemed almost impassable.

We managed, nevertheless, to reach the summit of the ridges after an hour's labor, and beheld Ignacio in the distance, scouring the plain at a gallop. A shout from our party soon arrested his attention, and wheeling his horse, he was quickly at our side at full dash over cliff and ravine. I felt mortified at having lost confidence in him at the village, as we found, on explanation, that he had been most anxiously engaged in endeavoring to persuade the Indian to guide us. The savage, however, steadily persisted for a long time in refusing to accompany him; believing that if he pointed out the fosil remains, we would certainly carry off some of them, "to which he would never consent, as they were the *bones of certain giants who had been the ancestors of his race!*"

I know not by what witchcraft Ignacio managed finally to prevail with the Indian; but he pointed him out, waiting for us at the foot of a group of palmettos on an opposite hill. Thither we quickly ascended; yet, scarcely had we reached the trees, when the rain commenced pattering down from the eastward, where it had been brewing as usual for the last hour around the brow of old Tlaloc.

The day was already far advanced and we had as yet seen nothing of remarkable interest. At the distance of a couple of leagues to the eastward, was the edge of the barranca containing the bones; while, a league to the west, was the unexplored hill of Tezcosingo. To see both of these spots on that evening was impossible, and yielding, therefore, to the earnest solicitation of the Indian, who pointed out to us the resting-place of the "*huesos de sus antepasados*" in the clayey soil of the eastern barran-

cas, we gathered together under the shelter of the trees, and partook of a dinner of dried kid, peppers and pulqué, preparatory to our visit to Tezcosingo.*

Directly at the foot of the eminence on which we rested, there was an extensive Indian remain. By an able system of engineering, the water had been brought by the ancients from the eastern sierra, for a distance, probably, of three leagues, by conduits across barrancas and along the sides of the hill; and the ruin below us was that of one of these aqueducts, across a ravine about a hundred feet in elevation.

You will find a view of this work in the opposite picture. The base of the two conduit pipes is raised to the required level on stones and masonry, and the canals for the water are made of an exceedingly hard cement, of mortar and fragments of pounded brick. Although, of course, long since abandoned, it is, in many places, as perfect as on the day of its completion; and perhaps as good a work, for all the necessary purposes, as could be formed at the present day by the most expert engineers.

The view over the valley, to the north, toward the Pyramids of Teotihuacan, and across the lake to Mexico, was uninterrupted; and the city (beyond the waters, surrounded by a *mirage* on the distant plain,) seemed placed again, as it was three hundred years ago, in the midst of a beautiful lake.

After we had finished our meal, we gave a small compensation to the conscientious Indian, (who seemed delighted to escape from the meditated sacrilege,) and resumed our route toward Tezcosingo. The road, for a long distance, lay over an extensive table-land, with a deep valley north and south, filled on both sides with haciendas, villages, and plantations. We crossed the shoulder of a mountain, and descended half way a second ravine, near the eighth of a mile in extent, until we struck the level of another ancient aqueduct that led the waters directly to the hill of Tezcosingo. This elevation was broader, firmer, and even in better preservation, than the first. It may be crossed on horseback—three abreast.

As soon as we struck the celebrated hill we began ascending rapidly, by an almost imperceptible cattle-path, among gigantic *cacti*, whose thorns tore our skins as we brushed by them. Over the whole surface, there were remains of a spiral road cut from the living rock—strewn with frag-

* After my return to Mexico, *tio* Ignacio persisted in obtaining some of these "*ancestral bones*" from the barrancas, and, although, the bagful he sent was nearly ground to powder before it reached me, there were still some considerable fragments which I desired to submit to our naturalists for their opinion. They have not yet, however, arrived in the United States from Vera Cruz.

Latrobe, at page 144, of his Rambles in Mexico, relates that some workmen in excavating for a canal at Chapingo, (a hacienda near Tezcoco,) reached, at the distance of four feet below the surface, "an ancient causeway, of the existence of which there had not been the remotest suspicion. The cedar piles by which the sides were supported were still sound at heart; and three feet below the edge of this ancient work they struck upon the entire skeleton of a Mastodon imbedded in blue clay. The diameter of the tusk was eighteen inches. Wherever extensive excavations have been made on the table-land and in the valley, of late years, remains of this animal have almost always been met with. In the foundation of the Church of Guadalupe—on the estate of St Nicholas, four leagues to the south, and in Guadalaxara, portions of the skeleton have been discovered." Had the ancients some means of taming these beasts into laborers for their gigantic architecture?

ANCIENT ACQUEDUCT, LEADING FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE HILL OF TEZCOSINGO.

ments of pottery, Indian arrows, and broken sacrificial knives; while, occasionally, we passed over the ruins of an aqueduct winding round the hill. The eminence seems to have been converted, from its base to its summit, (a distance of perhaps five hundred feet,) into a pile of those terraced gardens, so much admired by every tourist who falls into raptures among the romantic groves of Isola Bella.

Our horses seemed to be better accustomed to the dangerous clambering among these steeps, than ourselves, and we therefore continued in our saddles until we reached a point about fifty feet below the summit, where, in a due northerly direction, the rock had been cut into seats along a recess leading to a perpendicular wall, which is said to have been covered, until recently, with a Toltec Calendar. When the Indians found that a place, otherwise so unattractive, was visited by foreigners, they immediately imagined their ancestors had concealed treasures behind the stone; as they supposed that gold, and not mere curiosity could have lured strangers from a distance to so unsightly a spot. They consequently destroyed the carved rock in order to penetrate the hill, and there is now not a fragment of the ancient sculpture remaining. In the hole, burrowed by the treasure-finders, we discovered a number of Indians, of both sexes, sheltering themselves from the rain; and as they had a supply of *nopals*, (with which the surrounding rocks are covered,) we were not loth to dismount, and, forgetting our indignation for the moment—crawled into their cavern to enjoy the luscious fruit.

A few steps upward led us to the summit of Tezcosingo. I found there no remains of a temple or edifice; but as the hill is supposed to have been formerly dedicated to the bloody rites of Indian worship, modern piety has thought proper to purify the spot by the erection of a cross. And never was one built on a more majestic and commanding site. From its foot, the entire valley, lake, Tezcoco, Mexico, and lakes far to the north, were distinctly visible, and the beauty of the panorama was greatly increased by the sudden clearing of the skies, and an outburst of the setting sun.

Bidding our Indians farewell in their burrow, we descended over massive fragments of architecture, to a spot where a path terminates abruptly in a bastion-like wall, plunging precipitously down the side of the mountain for two hundred feet. Here we found what is called the "BATH OF MONTEZUMA."

BATH OF MONTEZUMA.

It will be observed in the drawing, that the rock is smoothed to a perfect level for several yards, around which, seats and grooves are carved from the adjacent masses. In the centre there is a circular sink, about a yard and a half in diameter, and a yard in depth, and a square pipe, with a small aperture, led the water from an aqueduct, which appears to terminate in this basin. *None of the stones have been joined with cement, but the whole was chiselled from the mountain rock.*

The origin and purpose of this work are entirely unknown. The view from it is secluded and picturesque, over a small glimpse of plain seen through a frame-work of narrow and shadowy valley;—but, (as Latrobe says,) "As to being MONTEZUMA'S BATH—it might have been his *foot*-bath, if you will—but it would be an impossibility for any monarch, of larger dimensions than Oberon, to take a duck in it!"

Such, however, is the extent of general Mexican antiquarianism; their knowledge of history reaches to the reign of the last monarch but one of the ancient Empire, and if a monument or an idol is not referable to

Montezuma it is disposed of most summarily by the universal—"Quien sabe!"

* * * * *

It was growing quite late (after descending the hill of Tezcosingo to the plain at the north of it,) as we passed through the estate of the ex-Marquis of V——, known as "*La Molina*," or the Mill. Extensive plantations of grain and maguey spread out over a vast expanse of country, and no buildings are perceptible until you approach the edges of a wide barranca, traversed by a stream from the mountains, freshening the verdure of clusters of shrubbery, that conceal the rocks and rugged sides of the ravine. After falling over a number of precipices, as the glen deepens, and forming some beautiful cascades, the brooklet gradually spreads out on the flats to the west, and here (niched in the last steeps of the tangled barranca,) have been erected the lofty dwelling, stores and mills of the farmer Marquis. Farther up the glen, beyond the dwelling, and reached by a narrow entrance which almost bars approach, the tasteful owner has formed the gorge through which the stream gurgles into one of the most exquisite retreats that can be imagined. The barranca is quite narrow; in its centre the brook skims along over a rocky bed; its sides have been smoothed and planted; grassy seats are built around sward covered recesses; rare flowers are imbedded in spots, where, shielded from the storms, they are ever fresh and blooming; a tiny chapel is erected on a jutting rock, and breaks the silence with its silvery bell; and, over all, the lofty trees (meeting in a Gothic arch from bank to bank,) cast their eternal shade throughout the scarcely varying seasons. It is the most beautiful *bijou* of rural design that I have seen in Mexico. Indeed, it is equalled by few, elsewhere, and may be regarded as the more remarkable, as the whole has been formed out of what was once but an unsightly gully.

12*th October*. We rode to-day to the Contador, another relic of Montezuma. It is a noble grove of cypresses, about a league northwest of Tezcoco. It was, however, not only our intention to see those trees; but Don Ignacio had eagerly persuaded us to join him in a plover-shooting expedition, on the marsh lands near the lake. I was, therefore, as you may well imagine, exceedingly surprised to find our guide waiting at his door, to accompany us, *mounted on a bull!* My first disposition was to laugh; but he prevented it by a smile, and a request to "wait until we got among the *chichiquillotes*, and see what a *sportsman* his beast was!" *Tio* is remarkable for his hunting strategy; and, besides his bull, (with which he hunts even in the mountains,) he has invented *a pipe* that perfectly counterfeits the bleating of deer; and by its sound he has often attracted a dozen around him, while lying concealed in the coverts of the forest. Upon the whole, he is a perfect Yankee in inventive talent for the destruction of game; and I doubt not that, if it were his

lot to live for a season on the banks of the Chesapeake, he would manage to convert himself occasionally into a stalk of "wild celery," to decoy the canvas-backs within reach of his weapon.

* * * * *

A ride of an hour over flats, partially covered with wretched looking salt-works, brought us to the *grove of the Contador*, which had been distinctly visible as soon as we left the garden suburb of Tezcoco.

Our party led their horses toward some higher ground, north of the square, which is formed by a double line of magnificent cypresses, near five hundred in number, and inclosing about ten acres of ground—while I (although warned by Ignacio) kept on to the interior of the grove, intending to coast around the trees in expectation of finding abundance of game. After lingering for half an hour in the grove, and finding my labor useless, I thought it best to take a short cut across the square in order to reach my companions; but, scarcely had my horse advanced a dozen paces over the apparently solid earth, when he suddenly halted and snorted, as if unwilling to proceed. I applied both whip and spur; and, in the next moment, he was above his girths—sinking in a morass! I sprang immediately on top of the saddle, and, seizing the lasso, leaped to the last spot where the animal had stood firmly. In the meantime my poor beast was sinking deeper and deeper—and when, by dint of the whip and encouragement, I brought his head around, he had already sunk to the saddle-cloth. Rolling himself slightly on his side, he made room to lift his legs, and thus, gradually floundered out of the deceptive marsh. When I rejoined my friends, they congratulated me on escaping as fortunately as I had done.

At the northwestern angle of this square I found a double row of cypresses, running westwardly toward a dyke. North of this again, I discovered a *deep tank*, of oblong shape, neatly walled with cut stone, and filled with water. Of the great antiquity of all these remains there can be no doubt, and it struck me that the interior of the cypress square was once a pond or mimic lake, filled no doubt from the neighboring Tezcoco, and forming part of the gardens of the luxurious monarchs. Unless this were the case, it is difficult to account for the spongy and yielding mass in the centre of the grove, while the surrounding grounds are dry and cultivated.

After lingering in the pleasant shade for an hour, and amusing ourselves with rifle-shooting at zopilotes perched on the highest branches of the cypresses, we started off (marshalled by *tio* on his bull *Sancho*,) toward the marshes that lay between the grove and town. Just as we were passing through a small Indian village near the salt-works, a thunder storm came on, and we immediately took shelter in the house of one of Ignacio's numerous acquaintances. The worthy man was a candle-maker by trade, and had a manufactory in full blast in the adjoining

room. The neighborhood, of course, was anything but fragrant; yet he drove out a couple of sheep, chickens and turkeys from a corner—arranged our saddles for chairs on the earthen floor—and we were soon enjoying a refreshing lunch of tortillias and pulqué.

After the shower had passed we again sallied forth, and reaching the marshy flats, amused ourselves with watching the operations of Ignacio, instead of making war ourselves upon the delicate birds. After wandering about for some time without starting game, Ignacio at last perceived a flock alight a hundred yards to the north of him. He dismounted immediately—waved his hand to us to remain quiet—crouched behind the bull, and putting the animal in motion, in the direction of the birds, they both crept on together until within gunshot. Here, by a twitch at his tail, the beast was stopped, and began munching the tasteless grass as eagerly as if gratifying a relishing appetite. Ignacio then slowly raised his head to a level with the bull's spine and surveyed the field of battle, while the birds paddled about the fens unconscious of danger. Although evidently within good shooting distance, the *tio* discovered that he had not precisely got a *raking range;* and therefore, again dodging behind his rampart, put the bull in motion for the required spot. This attained, he levelled his gun on the animal's back and fired—honest Sancho never stirring his head from the grass! Several birds fell, while the rest of the flock, seeing nothing but an unbelligerent bull, scarcely flew more than a dozen yards before they alighted again—and thus, the conspiring beast and sportsman sneaked along, from shot to shot, until nearly the whole flock was bagged!

The result of the afternoon's work was a plentiful platter, around which we gathered in the hospitable dwelling of L——; and not the least entertainment of the evening was a song from the "*tio,*" and a wild dance called "*the Zopilote,*" which he accomplished after several supplementary tumblers of capital pulqué.

13*th October*. Although our researches in this neighborhood are finished, we can to-day get no conveyance to Mexico. There is not a vehicle to be had in the town; the boats do not leave until to-morrow, and I feel indisposed to undergo the fatigue and exposure of a day's journey on horseback over the plains between the lakes.

I have therefore resolved to wait for the Indian canoes, and, in the meantime, will connect some sketches of interesting ruins that I find in memoranda made by me during the study of various authors who have written on American and Mexican antiquities.

I do so, because the works in which these subjects are discussed are exceedingly expensive, and rarely to be found either in this country or in Europe; and I desire, moreover, to show how completely the whole of this country has, at one time, been covered with an active and intelligent population, the only hints of whose history are left in the ruins of their splendid architecture.

AN ACCOUNT

OF

ANCIENT REMAINS

ON THIS CONTINENT.

Mounds and tumuli covering human relics, have been traced from Wales across the continent, through Russia and Tartary. I have been able to find no account of these works on the western side of the Rocky mountains, or in the direction of Behring's Straits; but, from the limits of Ouiskonsin, they constantly increase in number and extent.*

On the south side of Ontario, one of these remains, not far from Black river, is, I am informed, the farthest that has been discovered in a north-eastern direction. One on the Chenango river, at Oxford, is the farthest south on the eastern side of the Alleghanies, of undoubted and untraditional antiquity.

In travelling westwardly toward Lake Erie, some are to be found in Genessee County, but they are scarce and small until we arrive at Cattaraugus Creek, where, according to the late Governor Clinton, a chain of forts commences, extending southwardly upward of fifty miles, at a distance from each other of not more than four or five.

South of these again, extensive works were discovered at Circleville, at Chillicothe, at the mouth of the Scioto and Muskingum, at Cincinnati, at St. Louis, and at numerous points along the Valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi.

Among these tumuli and fortifications, a variety of interesting relics have been found by their explorers. Vessels of earthenware, utensils of copper, painted pottery, vases of curious form, copper beads, and circular plates of the same material, carvings in stone, silver and gold ornaments; and, at Natchez and near Nashville, *idols of stone*, which are not unlike those heretofore represented in my letters as existing in Mexico. Drawings of these idols are given in the *Archæologia Americana*, at pages 211 and 215 of the first volume.

* Most interesting accounts, accompanied by plates, of the ancient remains in Ouiskonsin Territory, and of the great war path from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan, are to be found in the January number of Silliman's Journal for 1842, and also in the 24th volume of that valuable work.

Extensive mural remains are scattered over the immense plain, from the southern shore of Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico, and may be traced around the Gulf, across Texas into New Mexico, increasing in size and splendor as they advance toward the south. The student who desires to examine the subject more minutely, may refer to the before-mentioned volume of the Archæologia Americana, where he will find a long and interesting treatise by Mr. Attwater;—the plates of which will illustrate the size and character of these works more satisfactorily than any mere verbal descriptions.

I have thus traced a continuous chain of structures, chiefly of earthen mounds, and trifling relics pertaining to the necessaries of life, defence, and worship, throughout the greater portion of our western territory until it joins the soil of Mexico. I will now proceed with the account of such antiquities, of an architectural character, besides those already described by me, as have come to my knowledge in the latter Republic.

In the year 1773, the Padre Francisco Garcés, accompanied by Padre Font, in the course of their travels in the northern departments of Mexico, arrived at a vast and beautiful plain on the south bank of the river Gila, running westwardly from the great chain of the Rocky mountains, and falling into the Gulf of California between the thirty-third and thirty-fourth degrees of north latitude. There the travellers discovered remains of extensive works and ruins, covering a square league of ground, in the midst of which was an edifice, called by them the "CASA GRANDE."

Like most of the Indian works, it was built of unburned bricks, and measured about four hundred and fifty feet in length, by two hundred and fifty in breadth. Within this edifice they found traces of five apartments. A wall, broken at intervals by lofty towers, surrounded the building, and appeared to have been designed for defence. The remains of a canal were still perceptible, by which the waters of the Gila had been conveyed to the ruined town.

The neighboring plains were covered (like the ruins I have recently described at Tezcoco and Tezcosingo,) with fragments of obsidian, and glazed and painted pottery; the Indians of the vicinity were found by the explorers to be mild, civil, and intelligent people, *devoted to the cultivation of the soil*, and possessing in no degree the ferocity or savage habits of the Cumanchés or Apachés.

Northwestwardly from Chihuahua, and southwestwardly from these ruins, near the thirtieth degree of latitude, are similar remains; and in the mountains in the latitude of 27° 28′, there is a multitude of caverns excavated from the solid rocks, on the sides and walls of which are painted the figures of various animals, and of men and women, in dresses by no means unlike the habiliments of the ancient Mexicans, as depicted in drawings and pictures that have been preserved until our day,

Some of the caves discovered by Father Joseph Rotéa, are described as being thirty feet in length by fifteen in breadth, and are supposed by writers to have been, perhaps, the "*seven abodes*" from which the Mexican tradition describes their ancestors as having issued when they began their emigration.

QUEMADA.

NORTH of the city of Mexico, in the department of Zacatecas, (a country that is supposed to have been inhabited by the Chicimecas and Ottomies at the period of the conquest,) situated on the level of a hill top, which rises out of the plain like another Acropolis, are the extensive remains of an Indian city, known as the "RUINS OF QUEMADA."*

The northern side of the *cerro* rises with an easy slope from the plain, and is guarded by bastions and a double wall, while, on the other sides, the steep and precipitous rocks of the hill itself, form natural defences. The whole of this elevation is covered with ruins; but on the southern side, chiefly, may be traced the remains of temples, pyramids, and edifices for the priests, cut from the living rock, and rising to the height of from two to four hundred feet above the level of the surrounding country. These rock-built walls are sometimes joined by mortar of no great tenacity, and the stones (many of which are *twenty-two feet in thickness, and of a corresponding height,*) are retained in their positions mainly by their own massiveness.

The opposite engraving represents the *patio*, or courtyard of a temple, as drawn by M. Nebel. On the back part of the square is raised the pyramid, or teocalli, on which was placed the altar and idol. The stairs behind the teocalli conduct to other temples and pyramids beyond, and served, perhaps, as seats for the spectators of the bloody rites that were celebrated by the priests.

The most satisfactory account I have seen of these ruins, is given by Captain Lyon in a volume of his travels in Mexico.

"We set out," says he, "on our expedition to the Cerro de los Edificios, under the guidance of an old ranchero, and soon arrived at the foot of the abrupt and steep rock on which the buildings are situated. Here we perceived two ruined heaps of stones, flanking the entrance to a causeway ninety-three feet broad, commencing at four hundred feet from the cliff.

"A space of about six acres has been inclosed by a broad wall, of which the foundations are still visible, running first to the south and afterward to the east. Off its southwestern angle stands a high mass of stones, which flanks the causeway. In outward appearance it is of a pyramidal form, owing to the quantities of stones piled against it either by design or by its own ruin; but on closer examination its figure could

* This name has been given from that of an adjacent hacienda.

RUINS OF GUANAPA.

be traced by the remains of solid walls, to have been a square of thirty-one feet by the same height: the heap immediately opposite is lower and more scattered, but in all probability formerly resembled it. Hence the grand causeway runs to the northeast until it reaches the ascent of the cliff, which, as I have already observed, is about four hundred yards distant. Here again are found two masses of ruins, in which may be traced the same construction as that before described; and it is not improbable that these two towers guarded the inner entrance to the citadel. In the centre of the causeway, which is raised about a foot and has its rough pavement uninjured, is a large heap of stones, as if the remains of some altar; round which we could trace, notwithstanding the accumulation of earth and vegetation, a paved border of flat slabs arranged in the figure of a six-rayed star.

"We did not enter the city by the principal road, but led our horses with some difficulty up the steep mass formed by the ruins of a defensive wall, inclosing a quadrangle two hundred and forty feet by two hundred, which, to the east, is still sheltered by a strong wall of unhewn stones, eight feet in thickness and eighteen in height. A raised terrace of twenty feet in width passes round the northern and eastern sides of this space, and on its southeast corner is yet standing a round pillar of rough stones, of the same height as the wall, and nineteen feet in circumference.

"There appear to have been five other pillars on the east, and four on the northern terrace; and as the view of the plain which lies to the south and west is hence very extensive, I am inclined to believe that the square has always been open in these directions. Adjoining to this, we entered by the eastern side to another quadrangle, entirely surrounded by perfect walls of the same height and thickness as the former one, and measuring one hundred and fifty-four feet by one hundred and thirty-seven. In this were yet standing fourteen very well-constructed pillars, of equal dimensions with that in the adjoining inclosure, and arranged, four in length and three in breadth of the quadrangle, from which on every side they separated a space of twenty-three feet in width: probably the pavement of a portico of which they once supported the roof. In their construction, as well as that of all the walls which we saw, a common clay having straw mixed with it has been used, and is yet visible in those places which are sheltered from the rains. Rich grass was growing in the spacious court where Aztec monarchs may once have feasted; and our cattle were so delighted with it that we left them to graze while we walked about three hundred yards to the northward, over a very wide parapet, and reached a perfect, square, flat-topped pyramid of large unhewn stones. It was standing unattached to any other buildings, at the foot of the eastern brow of the mountain, which rises abruptly behind it. On the eastern face is a platform of twenty-eight feet in width, faced by a parapet wall of fifteen feet, and from the base of this extends a second platform with a parapet like the former, and one hundred and eighteen feet wide. These form the outer defensive boundary of the mountain,

which from its figure has materially favored their construction. There is every reason to believe that this eastern face must have been of great importance. A slightly raised and paved causeway of about twenty-five feet descends across the valley, in the direction of the rising sun; and being continued on the opposite side of a stream which flows through it, can be traced up the mountains at two miles distance, until it terminates at the base of an immense stone edifice, which probably may also have been a pyramid. Although a stream (Rio del Partido) runs meandering through the plain from the northward, about midway between the two elevated buildings; I can scarcely imagine that the causeway should have been formed for the purpose of bringing water to the city, which is far more easy of access in many other directions much nearer to the river, but must have been constructed for important purposes between the two places in question; and it is not improbable, that it once formed the street between the frail huts of the poorer inhabitants. The base of the large pyramid measured fifty feet, and I ascertained, by ascending with a line, that its height was precisely the same. Its flat top was covered with earth and a little vegetation; and our guide asserted, although he knew not whence he received the information, that it was once surmounted by a statue. Off the southeast corner of this building and at about fifteen yards distant, is to be seen the edge of a circle of stones about eight feet in diameter, inclosing, as far as we could judge on scraping away the soil, a bowl-shaped pit, in which the action of fire was plainly observable; and the earth, from which we picked some pieces of pottery, was evidently darkened by an admixture of soot or ashes. At the distance of one hundred yards southwest of the large pyramid, is a small one, twelve feet square, and much injured. This is situated on somewhat higher ground, in the steep part of the ascent to the mountain's brow. On its eastern face, which is toward the declivity, the height is eighteen feet; and apparently there have been steps by which to descend to a quadrangular space, having a broad terrace round it, and extending east one hundred feet by a width of fifty. In the centre of this inclosure is another bowl-shaped pit, somewhat wider than the first. Hence we began our ascent to the upper works, over a well-buttressed yet ruined wall, built to a certain extent, so as to derive advantage from the natural abruptness of the rock. Its height on the steepest side is twenty-one feet, and the width on the summit, which is level, with an extensive platform, is the same. This is a double wall, one of ten feet having been first constructed, and then covered with a very smooth kind of cement, after which the second has been built against it. The platform (which faces to the south, and may to a certain extent be considered as a ledge from the cliff,) is eighty-nine feet by seventy-two; and on its northern centre stand the ruins of a square building, having within it an open space of ten feet by eight, and of the same depth. In the middle of the quadrangle is to be seen a mound of stones eight feet high. A little farther on, we entered by a broad opening between two perfect and massive walls, to a

square of one hundred and fifty feet. This space was surrounded on the south, east, and west, by an elevated terrace of three feet by twelve in breadth, having in the centre of each side steps, by which to descend to the square. Each terrace was backed by a wall of twenty feet by eight or nine. From the south are two broad entrances, and on the east is one of thirty feet, communicating with a perfect inclosed square of two hundred feet, while on the west is one small opening, leading to an artificial cave or dungeon, of which I shall presently speak.

"To the north, the square is bounded by the steep mountain; and, in the centre of that side, stands a pyramid with seven ledges or stages, which in many places are quite perfect. It is flat-topped, has four sides, and measures at the base thirty-eight by thirty-five feet, while in height it is nineteen. Immediately behind this, and on all that portion of the hill which presents itself to the square, are numerous tiers of seats, either broken in the rock or built of rough stones. In the centre of the square, and due south of the pyramid, is a small quadrangular building, seven feet by five in height. The summit is imperfect, but it has unquestionably been an altar; and from the whole character of the space in which it stands, the peculiar form of the pyramid, the surrounding terrace, and the seats or steps on the mountain, there can be little doubt that this has been the grand Hall of Sacrifice or Assembly, or perhaps both.

"Passing to the westward, we next saw some narrow inclosed spaces, apparently portions of an aqueduct leading from some tanks on the summit of the mountain; and then were shown the mouth of the cave, or subterraneous passage, of which so many superstitious stories are yet told and believed. One of the principal objects of our expedition had been to enter this mysterious place, which none of the natives had ever ventured to do, and we came provided with torches for the purpose: unfortunately, nowever, the mouth had very recently fallen in, and we could merely see that it was a narrow, well-built entrance, bearing in many places the remains of good smooth plastering. A large beam of cedar once supported the roof, but its removal by the country people had caused the dilapidation which we now observed. Mr. Tindal, in knocking out some pieces of regularly burnt brick, soon brought a ruin upon his head, but escaped without injury; and his accident caused a thick cloud of yellow dust to fall, which on issuing from the cave assumed a bright appearance under the full glare of the sun;—an effect not lost upon the natives, who became more than ever persuaded that an immense treasure lay hidden in this mysterious place. The general opinion of those who remember the excavation is, that it was very deep; and, from many circumstances, there is a probability of its having been a place of confinement for victims. Its vicinity to the great hall, in which there can be little doubt that the sanguinary rites of the Mexicans were once held, is one argument in favor of this supposition; but there is another equally forcible—its immediate proximity to a cliff of about one hundred and fifty feet, down which the bodies of victims may have been precipitated, as was the cus-

tom at the inhuman sacrifices of the Aztecs.* A road or causeway, to be noticed in another place, terminates at the foot of this precipice, exactly beneath the cave and overhanging rock; and conjecture can form no other idea of its intended utility, unless as being in some manner connected with the purposes of the dungeon.

"Hence we ascend to a variety of buildings, all constructed with the same regard to strength, and inclosing spaces on far too large a scale for the abode of common people. On the extreme ridge of the mountain were several tolerably perfect tanks.

"In a subsequent visit to this extraordinary place, I saw some other buildings, which had at first escaped my notice. These were situated on the summit of a rock terminating the ridge, at about half a mile to the N. N.W. of the citadel.

"The first is a building originally eighteen feet square, but having the addition of sloping walls to give it a pyramidal form. It is flat-topped, and on the centre of its southern face there have been steps by which to ascend to the summit. The second is a square altar, its height and base being each about sixteen feet. These buildings are surrounded at no great distance by a strong wall, and at a quarter of a mile to the northward, advantage is taken of a precipice to construct another wall of twelve feet in width upon its brink. On a small flat space, between this and the pyramid, are the remains of an open square edifice, to the southward of which are two long mounds of stone, each extending about thirty feet; and to the northeast is another ruin, having large steps up its side. I should conceive the highest wall of the citadel to be three hundred feet above the plain, and the bare rock surmounts it by about thirty feet more.

"The whole place in fact, from its isolated situation, the disposition of its defensive walls, and the favorable figure of the rock, must have been impregnable to Indians; and even European troops would have found great difficulty in ascending to those works, which I have ventured to name the Citadel. There is no doubt that the greater mass of the nation which once dwelt here, must have been established upon the plain beneath, since from the summit of the rock we could distinctly trace three straight and very extensive causeways, diverging from that over which we first passed. The most remarkable of these runs southwest for two miles, is forty-six feet in width, and, crossing the grand causeway, is continued to the foot of the cliff, immediately beneath the cave which I have described. Its more distant extreme is terminated by a high and long artificial mound, immediately beyond the river, toward the hacienda of La Quemada. We could trace the second, south and southwest to a small rancho named Coyoté, about four miles distant; and the third ran southwest by south, still farther, ceasing, as the country people informed us, at a mountain six miles distant. All these roads had been slightly raised, were

* The writings of Clavigero, Solis, Bernal Diaz, and others, describe the mode of disposing of the bodies of those whose hearts had been torn out and offered to the idol.

paved with rough stones, still visible in many places above the grass, and were perfectly straight.

"From the flatness of the fine plain over which they extended, I cannot conceive them to have been constructed as paths, since the people, who walked barefoot and used no animals of burthen, must naturally have preferred the smooth, earthy footways, which presented themselves on every side, to these roughly paved ones. If this be allowed, it is not difficult to suppose that they were the centre of streets of huts, which, being in those times constructed of the same kind of frail materials as those of the present day, must long since have disappeared. Many places on the plain are thickly strewed with stones, which may once have formed building materials for the town; and there are extensive modern walls round the cattle farms, which, not improbably, were constructed from the nearest streets. At all events, whatever end these causeways may have answered, the citadel itself still remains, and from its size and strength confirms the accounts given by Cortéz, Bernal Diaz, and others of the conquerors, of the magnitude and extent of the Mexican edifices, but which have been doubted by Robertson, De Pau, and others. We observed also, in some sheltered places, the remains of good plaster, confirming the accounts above alluded to; and there can be little doubt that the present rough, yet magnificent buildings, were once encased in wood and whitened, as ancient Mexico, the towns of Yucatan, Tobasco, and many other places are described to have been.*

"The Cerro de los Edificios, and the mountains of the surrounding range, are all of gray porphyry, easily fractured into slabs, and this, with comparatively little labor, has furnished building-materials for the edifices which crown its summit. We saw no remnants of obsidian among the ruins or on the plain—which is remarkable, as being the general substance of which the knives and arrow-heads of the Mexicans were formed;† but a few pieces of a very compact porphyry were lying about, and some appeared to have been chipped to a rude form resembling arrow-heads.

"Not a trace of the ancient name of this interesting place, or that of the nation which inhabited it, is now to be found among the people in the neighborhood, who merely distinguished the isolated rock and buildings by one common name, 'Los Edificios.' I had inquired of the best instructed people about these ruins; but all my researches were unavailing, until I fortunately met with a note in the Abbé Clavigero's History of Mexico, which throws some light on the subject. 'The situation of Chicomoztoc, where the Mexicans sojourned nine years, is not known; but it appears to be that place, twenty miles distant from Zacatecas, toward the south, where there are still some remains of an immense edifice, which, accord-

* See the Voyage of Juan de Grijalva, in 1518; also Bernal Diaz, Cortéz, Clavigero, and others.

† It is not improbable, however, that this material was unknown to the nation who dwelt here, if, according to the Abbé Clavigero, this city was one of the earliest settlements of the Aztecs, before they established themselves in the Valley of Mexico, near which (at Real del Monte principally) the obsidian is found in great abundance, although I believe that no traces of it are seen in the more northern provinces.

ing to the tradition of the Zacatecanos, the ancient inhabitants of that country, was the work of the Aztecs on their migration; and it certainly cannot be ascribed to any other people, the Zacatecanos themselves being so barbarous as neither to live in houses nor to know how to build them."*

* * * * *

MAPILCA.

Following the course of the river Tecolutla from its mouth near Nautla, and directing himself across the Virgin mountains and plains, Mr. Nebel found, at the distance of a few leagues from Papantla, the ruins of a city, near an Indian rancho called Mapilca.

It is impossible, he states, to define precisely the limits of this ancient work, because it is now entirely covered with thick vegetation, and a forest, the silence of which has, perhaps, never been disturbed by an axe. He nevertheless discovered some pyramids, many large sculptured stones, and some other indications of an extensive city and civilized people.

SCULPTURED STONE AT MAPILCA.

* Clavigero, vol. i. book ii. p. 153.—Torquemada says, that the capital city of the Chechemecas was called Amaquemecan. He says this place was 600 miles distant from where the city of Guadalaxara now stands. Clavigero, who quotes this passage and comments upon it in a note, remarks that "in more than one thousand two hundred miles of inhabited country beyond that city, there is not the least trace or memory of Amaquemecan." May not the city I have described be the capital in question?

TEMPLE AT TUSAPAN.

The stone, represented in the cut, is twenty-one feet long and of compact granite; its carving is oddly different from anything else we have seen among Mexican antiquities, and it is supposed, by Nebel, to have formed part of an edifice. He caused an excavation to be made by the Indians in front of this fragment, and, at a short distance below the surface, struck upon a road formed of irregular stones, not unlike the ancient pavements in the neighborhood of Rome. The picturesque traveller (whose book, I regret, is too large and expensive for republication in our country,) exceedingly regrets that he was unable to prosecute his inquiries and examinations in this neighborhood. He was alone, and unaided in the forests, except by a few idle and ignorant Indians; yet he has presented his readers with a drawing of this curious fragment, as the sign of a civilization that once reigned in a country which was hitherto imagined to have been inhabited alone by wild beasts and reptiles.

* * * * *

TUSAPAN.

We have now advanced, in the course of this examination, into the *tierra caliente*, near the eastern coast of Mexico. Fifteen leagues west from Papantla, lie the remains of TUSAPAN, supposed to have been a city of the Totonacos. They are situated in the lap of a small plain at the foot of the Cordillera, and are relics of a town of but limited extent. Of all these, however, nothing remains in great distinctness but the pyramidal monument, or Teocalli, of which the opposite drawing is given by Nebel.

This edifice has a base line of thirty feet on every side, and is built of irregular stones. A single stairway leads to the upper part of the first story, on which is erected a quadrangular house or tower,—while, in front of the door, still stands the pedestal of the idol, though all traces of the figure itself are gone. The interior of this apartment is twelve feet square, and the roof terminates in a point like the exterior. The walls have evidently been painted, but the outlines of the figures are no longer distinguishable.

The door and the two friezes are formed of sculptured stones; but it is evident from the fragments of carving, and a variety of figures of men and animals that lie in heaps about the rest of the city, that this temple was, in point of adornment, by no means the most splendid edifice of Tusapan.

Nebel has also presented us with a drawing of the following singular monument, which he found among the ruins of this ancient city.

FOUNTAIN AT TUSAPAN.

It is a statue, nineteen feet high, cut from the solid rock. The dress clearly indicates the figure to be that of a *squatting woman*, with her head inclining on one side. Behind the head, there are remains of a pipe conveying water to the body, through which it passed somewhat in the style of the celebrated fountain of Antwerp. From this figure, the stream was carried by a small canal to the neighboring city, and the whole is supposed, by Monsieur Nebel, to have been dedicated as the idol of some god or goddess of the waters.

There is a tradition extant that the people who once inhabited Tusapan, finding their soil comparatively steril, and their springs failing, emigrated to Papantla,—to which we come next in the course of our antiquarian ramble.

PAPANTLA.

The village of that name lies sixteen leagues from the sea, and fifty-two north from Vera Cruz, at the base of the eastern mountains, in the midst of fertile savannahs, constantly watered by streams from the neigh-

PYRAMID OF PAPANTLA.

boring hills. Although it is the centre of a country remarkable for fertility,* the Indian village has scarcely a *white* inhabitant, with the exception of the Curate and some few dealers, who come from the coast to traffic their wares for the products of the soil. The people of the upper country dislike to venture into the heat and disease of the *tierra caliente;* and, in turn, its inhabitants dislike an exposure to the chills of the *tierras frias* or *templadas*. Thus the region of PAPANTLA, two leagues from the village, has hitherto remained an unexplored nook, even at the short distance of fifty miles from the coast; and, although it was alluded to by Baron Humboldt, it had never been correctly drawn, or even accurately described before the visit of M. Nebel. The neighboring Indians, even, had scarcely seen it, and considerable local knowledge was required to trace a path to the relic through the wild and tangled forest.

There is no doubt, from the masses of ruins spread over the plain, that this city was more than a mile and a half in circuit. Although there seems good reason to believe that it was abandoned by its builders after the conquest, there has still been time enough, both for the growth of the forest in so warm and prolific a climate, and for the gradual destruction of the buildings by the seasons and other causes. Indeed, huge trees, trailing plants and parasite vines have struck their roots among the crannies and joints of the remaining pyramid, and, in a few years more, will consign even that remnant to the common fate of the rest of the city.

The opposite plate presents a view of the pyramid, (called by the natives, "El Tajin,") as seen by Nebel, after he had cleared it of trees and foliage. It consists of seven stories, each following the same angle of inclination, and each terminated, as at Xochicalco, by a frieze and cornice. The whole of these bodies are constructed of sand-stone, neatly squared and joined,—and covered, to the depth of three inches, with a strong cement, which appears, from the remains of color in many places, to have been entirely painted. The pyramid measures precisely one hundred and twenty feet on every side,† and is ascended, in front, by a stairway of fifty-seven steps, divided in three places, by small box-like recesses or niches two feet in depth, similar to those which are seen perforating the frieze of each of the bodies. This stairway terminates at the top of the sixth story, the seventh appearing (although in ruins,) to have been unlike the rest, and hollow. Here, most probably, was the shrine of the divinity and the place of sacrifice.‡

* * * * *

* The productions here are vanilla, sarsaparilla, pepper, wax, cotton, coffee, tobacco, a variety of valuable woods, and sugar, produced annually from canes, which it is necessary to plant only every seven or eight years.

† Nebel does not give the elevation, but says there are 57 steps to the top of the sixth story—each step measuring one foot in height.

‡ Vide Humboldt, vol. ii., 345—and Nebel.

MISANTLA.

Passing by the *Island of Sacrificios*, (of which I have already given some account, when treating of the Museum of Mexico,) I will now describe the ruins that were discovered as recently as 1835, adjacent to MISANTLA, near the city of Jalapa and not very far from the direct road to the Capital.

The work from which I extract my information is the Mosaico Mexicano, to which it was contributed, I believe, by Don Isidrio Gondra.

On a lofty ridge of mountains in the Canton of Misantla, there is a hill called Estillero, (distant some thirty miles from Jalapa,) near which lies a mountain covered with a narrow strip of table-land, perfectly isolated from the surrounding country by steep rocks and inaccessible barrancas. Beyond these dells and precipices there is a lofty wall of hills, from the summit of one of which the sea is distinctly visible in the direction of Nautla. The only parts of the country by which this plain is accessible, are the slopes of Estillero;—on all other sides the solitary mountain seems to have been separated from the neighboring land by some violent earthquake that sunk the earth to an unfathomed depth.

On this secluded and isolated eminence, are situated the remains of an ancient city. As you approach the plain by the slopes of Estillero, a broken wall of large stones, united by a weak cement, is first observable. This appears to have served for protection to a circular plaza, in the centre of which is a pyramid eighty feet high, forty-nine feet front, and forty-two in depth.

The account does not state positively whether this edifice is constructed of stone, but it is reasonable to suppose that it is so from the wall found around the plaza, and the remains which will be subsequently mentioned. It is divided into three stories, or rather, there are three still remaining. On the broadest front, a stairway leads to the second body, which, in turn, is ascended at the side, while the top of the third is reached by steps cut in the corner edge of the pyramid. In front of the *teocalli*, on the second story, are two pilastral columns, which may have formed part of a staircase; but this portion of the pyramid, and especially the last body, is so overgrown with trees that its outline is considerably injured. On the very top, (driving its roots into the spot that was doubtless formerly the holy place of the Temple,) there is a gigantic tree, which, from its immense size in this comparatively high and temperate region, denotes a long period since the abandonment of the altar where it grows.

At the periphery of the circular plaza around this pyramid, commence the remains of a town, extending northerly in a straight line for near a league. Immense square blocks of stone buildings, separated by streets at the distance of about three hundred yards from each other, mark the

PYRAMID OF MISANTLA.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

sites of the ancient habitations, fronting upon four parallel highways. In some of the houses the walls are still three or four feet high, but of most of them there is nothing but an outline tracery of the mere foundations. On the south, there are the remains of a long and narrow wall, which defended the city in that quarter.

North of the town there is a tongue of land, occupied in the centre by a mound, or cemetery. On the left slope of the hill by which the ruins are reached, there are, also, twelve circular sepulchres, two yards and a half in diameter, and as many high; the walls are all of neatly cut stone, but the cement with which they were once joined has almost entirely disappeared. In these sepulchres several bodies were found, parts of which were in tolerable preservation.

Two stones—a foot and a half long, by half a foot wide—were discovered, bearing hieroglyphics, which are described, in general terms, as "resembling the usual hieroglyphics of the Indians." Another figure was found representing a man standing; and another, cut out of a firm but porous stone, which was intended to portray a person sitting cross-legged, with the arms also crossed, resting on his knees. This, however, was executed in a very inferior style. Near it, were discovered many domestic utensils, which were carried to Vera Cruz, whence they have been dispersed, perhaps, to the four quarters of the globe.

It is thus, in the neglect of all antiquities in Mexico, in the midst of her political distractions and bloody revolutions, that every vestige of her former history will gradually pass to foreign countries, instead of enriching the Cabinets of her University, and stimulating the inquisitiveness of her scientific students.

MITLA.

I will close this notice of Mexican Architectural Remains, with an account of the ruins of MITLA, as described by Mr. Glennie, and Baron Humboldt, from whose great work the sketch of one of the mural fragments opposite the next page, has been taken.

In the Department of Oaxaca, ten leagues distant from the city of that name, on the road to Tehuantepec, in the midst of a granitic country, surrounded by sombre and gloomy scenery, lie the remains of what have been called, by the general consent of antiquarians, the *Sepulchral Palaces of Mitla*. According to tradition, they were built by the Zapotecs, and intended as the places of sepulture for their Princes. At the death of members of the royal family, their bodies were entombed in the vaults beneath; and the sovereign and his relatives retired to mourn over the loss of the departed scion, in the chambers above these solemn abodes, screened by dark and silent groves from the public eye. Another tradition devotes the edifices to a sect of priests, whose duty it was to live

in perfect seclusion, and offer expiatory sacrifices for the royal dead who reposed in the vaults beneath.

The village of Mitla was formerly called Miguitlan, signifying, in the Mexican tongue, "*a place of sadness;*" and, by the Zapotecs, Léoba, or "The tomb."

These palace-tombs formed three edifices, symmetrically placed on a romantic site. The principal building (which is still in the best preservation,) has a length of near one hundred and fifty feet. A stairway leads to a subterranean apartment of about one hundred feet by thirty in width, the walls of which are covered with ornaments, *à la grèque*, similar to those that adorn the exterior walls represented in the drawing. These ornaments are inlaid in a mosaic of porphyritic stones, and resemble the figures found on Etruscan vases, and on the frieze of the temple of the god Redicolus, near the Egerian grotto at Rome.

The engraved fragment represents a corner of one of the edifices, and you cannot fail to remark a similarity to some of the designs presented to the public by Mr. Catherwood, in his researches farther south.

The ruins of Mitla are distinguished, I believe, from all the remains of ancient architecture in Mexico, by six columns of porphyry, placed in the midst of a large saloon, and supporting the ceiling. They have neither bases nor capitals, and are cut, in a gradually tapering shape, from a solid stone rather more than fifteen feet in length. The dimensions of the stones that cover the entrances of the principal halls, are stated by Mr. Glennie to be as follows:

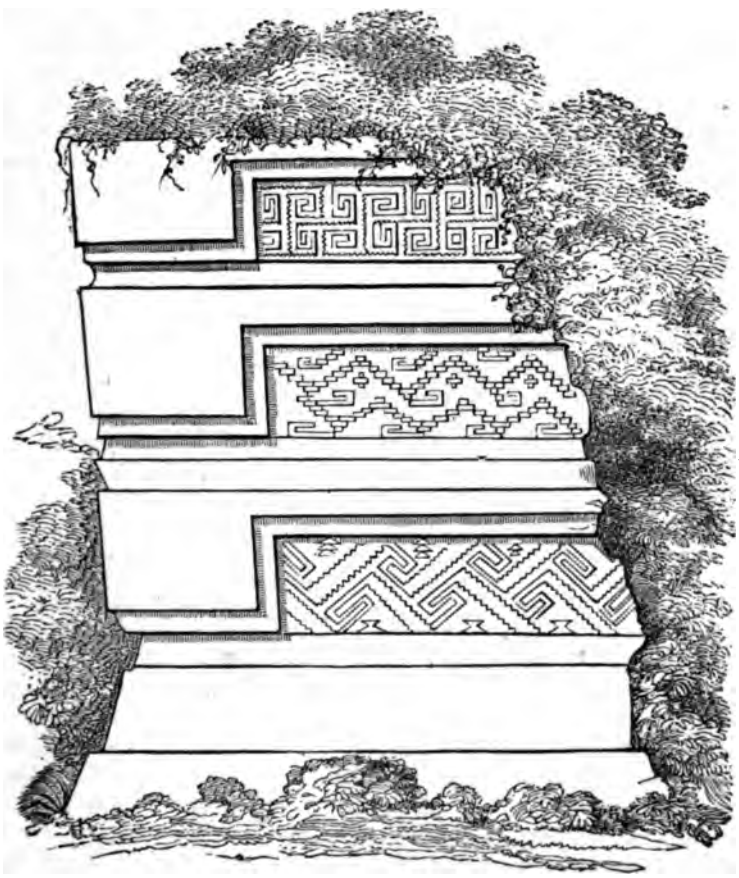
	Length.	Breadth.	Thickness.
1	19 feet 6 inches.	4 feet 10 inches.	3 feet 4 inches.
2	18 " 8 "	4 " 10 "	3 " 6 "
3	19 " 4 "	4 " 10½ "	3 " 9 "

Mr. De Laguna has discovered, among the ruins, some curious paintings of war trophies and sacrifices; and Humboldt remarks, that the distribution of the apartments in the interior of this building presents some striking similarities to the monuments of Upper Egypt, as described by Mr. Denon, and the *savans* of the Institute of Cairo. "In comparing the grandeur of these tombs with the meanness of the habitations of the former race," says the Baron, "we may exclaim, with Diodorus Siculus, that there are people who erect their most sumptuous monuments for their dead alone, regarding existence as too short and transitory to be worth the trouble of erections for the living!"†

It was the same in Egypt. The hereafter, and not the present, engaged the hearts of its ancient race. In Mexico, the temple to worship in, and the tomb for final repose, seem to have been the chief care of the

* The reader will find a ground plan of these remains in Delafield's "Antiquities of America"—page 85, taken from Baron Humboldt's Atlas.

† Vide Humboldt, vol. ii, page 288. et seq. Paris edition, 1811.



SCALE OF VARAS.—RUINS AT MITLA.

people. It was a pious and philosophic devotion of time, worthy as well of Christian nations as of those believing in the necessary care of their worthless bodies, until the period of their ultimate reunion with the spirit.

I have thus hastily gathered together some sketches of the remains that cover our Continent from the remote north of our own possessions to near the region of Mr. Stephens's discoveries.

If they fail to identify the Southern nations with the Northern tribes, or to prove that the rude mound of the savage was but the precursor of the stone pyramid of the civilized southern, they will at least serve to show that at the north, as well as in more genial climates, there have been races who worshipped the Great Spirit, buried their dead, defended themselves from their foes, and possessed, at least, a partial taste for the refinements of life. At all events, it is not probable that the remains so plentifully sprinkled over the Mexican territory, from the Rio Gila to the limits of Oaxaca, were untenanted and unused at the period of the conquest, while it is known that the cities of Mexico and of Cholula contained within their limits magnificent edifices, devoted to the domestic comfort and public worship of a refined and numerous population.

* * * * *

HOME.

14*th October*. Returned to Mexico. The last person who bade us farewell in Tezcoco, was the worthy Tio Ignacio—of whose hunting-bull, deer-call, rough honesty, and wild adventures, I shall long retain a pleasing recollection.

"I am poor, Caballero," said he, with a grasp of his hard hand, "I am poor, and have led a dog's life of it from the age of five years—fighting, bull-catching, beef-selling, hunting and living with the Indians up in the mountains for weeks, with no covering but my blanket and a pine tree;—but I have managed, nevertheless, to raise a large family of boys, all of whom can ride better than I; can catch a bull at full gallop; know how to read and write; tell the truth; obey their father without questioning, and hit the mark at eighty *varas!* I owe no man a *claco*. I love my horse, my gun, my *pulqué*,—and, better than all, I love my old wife, who, with all my wildness, passion, and temper, has never quarrelled with me in a *casamiento* of twenty years! Who says as much in Mexico? *Vaya!*

"Come to Tezcoco once more, Caballero, and we will go up to Tlaloc together with my people, the Indians, and I'll make that old *demonio* give up some of the bones of his ancestors—*picaro! Adios!*"

LETTER XXV.

WHENCE CAME THE ANCIENT POPULATION? WHO BUILT THE ANCIENT CITIES? WHO WORSHIPPED THE IDOLS?

After this somewhat extended inspection of the Monuments of Mexican antiquity, the question naturally proposes itself to our minds:—Who were the builders of these temples, the worshippers of the idols, and whence did they come? Separated now by wide and lonely seas from the Continents of the Old World, was there once a period when the lands were united, and the same race spread over both? Or, are we to doubt the traditional and written histories of ages, and believe that an *original* race peopled the American wilds, and built and worshipped after the promptings of their own spirits?

These are questions that have puzzled and must continue to puzzle the antiquarians of both hemispheres. They cannot be solved. The traditions—the habits—the languages—the edifices—of all tribes, races, and nations, have been studied and contrasted without result. Separate theories have been earnestly and ingeniously advanced. First, that the inhabitants came by the north and through Behring's Straits. Second, that they came by the islands of the Pacific, or that in times long past, the Pacific was not all sea, but partly filled, perhaps, with a vast Continent—and Third, that they may have arrived from the Old World by the Atlantic. There are long periods of unwritten and even untraditional history of the world, and learned and pious geologists seem now to be agreed in believing that when it is declared: "In the *beginning* God created the heaven and the earth," it is not affirmed that God created the heaven and the earth on the first *day*, but that "this '*beginning*' may have been an epoch, at an unmeasured distance, followed by periods of undefined duration, during which all the *physical* operations disclosed by geology were going on."*

This is certainly satisfactory as to the formation of the earth—a mere fulcrum for the development and powers of a *future* human race. But, must not the Bible be considered a full historical account of "all the operations of the Creator in times and places with which that *human*

* Buckland, vol. i, p. 28.

race is concerned?" Is it *daring* to question this? How small is the geographical space covered by the history of the Old Testament! It is an established fact, that the whole of the *animal races* are not common to both Continents. A great variety of quadrupeds have been found in America that were unknown in Europe, and the same is true in regard to birds and fish.

It is difficult to touch this question, without interfering with the authority of the Pentateuch; but if we were at liberty to discuss such matters, there are few who would not hold the doctrine, that it is perfectly reconcilable with rational science to believe, that the two Continents existed contemporaneously from the oldest periods, filled with distinct races, of separate customs, manners, habits and languages; who, by the simple and natural impulses of humanity arrived at similar results, in religion, science, architecture and government. *Animals* found in both hemispheres arrive at the same results—why may not *man?* It is replied, that they are guided alone by *instincts?* Is it not by his *instincts*, improved by his *reason*, that man, too, is led to every operation of his varied life? By the ruins which are left, of what those instincts and reason once produced on this Continent, we are alone enabled to judge of our ancestors. Defence—protection from the weather—religion—the calculation of time—the necessity of food;—these are the chief instinctive wants and promptings of man's nature. Men suffer from the seasons, from sun and shower,—hence dwellings. Men have a natural feeling of adoration, gratitude, dependence,—hence religion, groves, altars, mounds, and even *pyramids*, as they advance in civilization. Men behold the natural changes of day and night; the motion of the sun, moon and stars; they note that there is an equality of time and season, and that these are comparatively of longer or shorter duration at different periods of the year,—and hence a calendar. Men are social, and congregate into societies, and in the process of time their natural passions beget discontent and wars,—hence fortifications and weapons of defence. Men hunger,—and hence the invention of instruments by which they succeed in the sports of the field, or control the chase. And, at length, with all the elements of civilized society around them, in shrines, bulwarks, domestic retreats, arsenals, social love, and national glory—they come to have a *history;* and, with the laudable desire of perpetuating the memory of themselves and of their epoch, you find at Palenque, as well as in Egypt and on the Ganges, those figured monuments which tell the tale of the departed great, by symbols, letters, paintings or hieroglyphics.

Now, separated by thousands of leagues of sea from the Eastern hemisphere, and with men who had no means, but the frail canoe, of transporting themselves over it, you suddenly alight on these shores, in the midst of the sixteenth century;—and find temples, idols, the remains of dwellings, fortifications, weapons of defence and chase, astronomical calendars, and people, worshipping, living and governing in the midst of every external evidence of *ancient* civilization. The whole of North America, we have

seen, and a large portion of South America, is strewn with these or similar remains, from Canada to far below the equator. Here, in the north, it is supposed that there were *three races*, succeeding each other, two of which have vanished even from tradition.

"The monuments of the *first*, or primitive race," said the late William Wirt, "are regular stone walls, wells stoned up, brick hearths, found in digging the Louisville canal, medals of copper, silver swords, and other implements of iron. Mr. Flint assures us that he has seen these strange ancient swords. He has also examined a small iron shoe, like a horse-shoe, incrusted with the rust of ages, and found far below the soil, and a copper axe, weighing about two pounds, singularly tempered and of peculiar construction.

"These relics, he thinks, belonged to a race of *civilized* men, who must have disappeared many centuries ago. To this race he attributes the hieroglyphic characters found on the limestone bluffs; the remains of cities and fortifications in Florida; the regular banks of ancient live-oaks near them; and the bricks found at Louisville, *nineteen feet below the surface, in regular hearths, with the coals of the last domestic fire upon them;*—these bricks were hard and regular, and longer in proportion to their width than those of the present day.

"To the *second* race of beings are attributed the vast mounds of earth, found throughout the whole western region, from Lake Erie and western Pennsylvania to Florida and the Rocky mountains. Some of them contain skeletons of human beings, and display immense labor. Many of them are regular mathematical figures, parallelograms and sections of circles, showing the remains of gateways and subterranean passages. *Some are eighty feet high, and have trees growing on them, apparently of the age of five hundred years.* They are generally of a soil differing from that which surrounds them, and they are most common in situations where it since has been found convenient to build towns and cities.

"One of these mounds was levelled in the centre of Chillicothe, and cart-loads of human bones removed from it. Another may be seen in Cincinnati, in which a thin circular piece of gold, alloyed with copper, was found last year. Another in St. Louis, named the "Falling Garden," is pointed out to strangers as a great curiosity.

"Many fragments of earthenware, some of curious workmanship, have been dug up throughout this vast region; some represented *drinking vessels*, some *human heads*, and some *idols;*—they all appear to have been moulded by the hand, and hardened in the sun. These mounds and earthen implements indicate a race inferior to the *first*, which was acquainted with the use of iron.

"The *third* race are the Indians now existing on the Western Territories. In the profound silence and solitude of these regions, and above the bones of a buried world, how must a philosophic traveller meditate upon the transitory state of human existence, *when the only traces of the beings of two races of men are these strange memorials!* On this very spot

generation after generation has stood, lived, warred, grown old and passed away; and not only their names, but their nation, their language has perished, and utter oblivion has closed over their once populous abodes! We call this the *New World*. It is old! Age after age, and one physical revolution after another has passed over it—but *who shall tell its history?*"

Who? We have seen the memorials of three distinct races—but who can tell the origin of the first two—or even of the last? And, yet, these are only part of the inhabitants of North America.

I have attempted to describe to you the prominent remains that still exist farther south, in the Valley of Mexico, and in other portions of the Republic. Following the links of the chain still farther south, Messieurs Stephens and Catherwood have given an account of *forty* cities visited by them in their second tour; and they describe the ruins of others and their monuments, still more southerly, in their former volumes.

In South America, we have only the most distinct accounts of Peru; and although the Government of the Incas possessed no regular city but Cuzco, many interesting specimens have been exhumed from the "Guacas," or mounds, with which they covered the bodies of the dead. "Among these," says Dr. Rees, are "mirrors of various dimensions, of *hard shining stones, highly polished;* vessels of earthenware, of different forms; hatchets and other instruments, some destined for war, and others for labor. Some were of flint, some of *copper*, hardened by an unknown process, to such a degree as to supply the place of iron." To these may be added a variety of curious drinking vessels, made of pottery baked and painted; many specimens of which embellish the public and private Museums of our country, and are not unlike some that have been found in the Island of Sacrificios.

PERUVIAN WATER VESSELS.

The public roads of the Peruvians were also worthy of all praise; especially those two magnificent highways traversing the country from Quito to Cuzco for fifteen hundred miles;—the one passing through the in-

terior over mountain and valley, and the other by the plains of the sea-coast. But, in the construction of their Temples this remarkable people exhibited their greatest ingenuity, as well as in their edifices designed for the comfort and occupation of their sovereigns. "The Temple of Pachacamac, together with the Palace of the Inca, and Fortress, were so connected together, as to form one great structure above half a league in circuit. Though they had not discovered the use of mortar, or of any other cement in building, the bricks and stones are joined with such nicety that the seams can hardly be discerned. Notwithstanding the inconvenient arrangement of the apartments, and the want of windows, the architectural works of the Peruvians, which still remain, must be considered as stupendous efforts of a people unacquainted with the use of iron and the mode of applying the mechanical powers. Among the ancient edifices of this people, we may mention the Obelisk and Statues of Tiahuanuca, and Mausoleums of Chachapoyas, which are conical buildings of stone, supporting rude busts of huge and massive dimensions."*

Yet all that these remains from north to south, through such a varied extent of latitude and climate, can effect, is to strike us with wonder, and stimulate, though they puzzle our most eager curiosity. The monuments, themselves disclose nothing of the origin of the races. Is there, then, a written record? Are there any volumes or scattered leaves remaining to tell the story?

The only remnant of this character that I have been able to discover (and it is slightly referred to by Mr. Stephens,) is, what is called an Aztec manuscript, which was purchased in 1739 by Göetz, at Vienna, during a literary tour he made to Italy, and is now preserved, under the name of *Codex Mexicanus*, in the Royal Collection of Dresden.

It is written on *metl*, or paper undoubtedly made of the leaves of the *Agave Americana*, similar to others brought from Mexico and preserved at Veletri, Vienna, and in the Vatican. It is described as forming a *tabella plicalis*, or folding book, which may be shut up like a map; nearly eighty-one yards in length, and covered, on both sides, with paintings and written characters. Each page is about seven inches in length by three inches and a little more in breadth. One side of the page is occupied by painted figures, and the rest by signs or letters placed side by side, and by no means unlike the Chinese, or the hieroglyphic characters delineated by Mr. Catherwood, as partly covering the monuments at Palenque and Copan.

The opposite plate is a precise copy of one page of this manuscript as given by Baron Humboldt, in his Atlas, except that I have been unable to present you with the brilliant blue, red, green and yellow colors that tint the figures and give to the whole the appearance and effect of an illuminated missal.

A writer in the sixteenth volume of the Edinburgh Review, at page 222 of the American edition, casts doubts on the genuineness of this man-

* Rees, vol. xxviii. article, Peru.

MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT.

uscript, as being of Aztec origin; he thinks "it highly improbable that it is Mexican, as nothing like it has yet been found among the monuments of that people; while, on the other hand, it seems probable that it is the workmanship of the same race that reared and inhabited Palenque, seeing that similar characters abound among its ruins." One of the strongest circumstantial evidences, in all legal investigations of the authenticity of documents, is the material on which they are written. False wills have thus been detected by the date in the water mark; and, in this instance, it will be recollected that the material is precisely similar to that which is known to have been brought from Mexico, containing drawing, that were undoubtedly made by the Aztecs. In addition to this, it is a work written and painted on paper made of the Agave Americana, or American Aloe, not a single one of which is delineated by Mr. Catherwood as growing wild among the ruins of Palenque. In fact, it is a plant almost unknown in the level and warmer territories near the coast; it is peculiar to the elevated plateaus of the Valley of Mexico and the adjacent country, and I do not remember to have seen it, in the course of my journey through the *tierra caliente*, even at the short distance of sixty miles south of the Capital in the vale of Cuernavaca. If it be replied to this that the paper or leaf may have been brought to Palenque from Mexico, the answer would at once show a connection of arts between the people, and go far to prove their national identity or close alliance and intercourse. It should be remembered, too, that works like this would very naturally have been the first to be destroyed in Mexico, and the smallness of their number would thus be successfully accounted for.

From these facts we may fairly argue that this book of eighty yards in length, covered with written characters and illuminated with pictures, is, in all probability, a Mexican production. The figures of the men or demons are evidently similar, both in physignomy, posture and faces, to those on the monuments and idols I have already described to you. But who shall decipher their meaning, or that of the hieroglyphics?

For years the antiquarians of the Old World were guessing at the signification of Egyptian hieroglyphics, until, in 1799, a French engineer, when digging the foundations of Fort St. Julien, on the west bank of the Nile, between Rosetta and the sea, discovered the fragment of a stone which is now deposited in the British Museum. It contained an inscription in hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Greek—two of which are ancient Egyptian languages. The Greek was deciphered and the translation applied to the Demotic, and both, again, to the hieroglyphic; and, thus, after years of patient and unceasing toil, a key has been formed by which the present savans of Europe go among the relics of Egypt, and decipher the inscriptions on their tombs as easily as we read the mementoes over the graves of our friends in the cemeteries of Boston or Baltimore. But even if a Rosetta stone were discovered in Mexico, there is no Indian tongue to supply the key or interpreter.

We are thus, in all probability, for ever stopped in our investigations of the origin of these races;—either from their Monuments or their written Records. We are left to trace national relations by similar buildings, similar dresses, similar traditions, similar worship, similar governments, or similar faith; but all these identities are not inconsistent with the idea arrived at by Mr. Bradford in his Researches on the Origin and History of the Red Race, that the Aborigines of America may have been "a primitive branch of the human family."*

I confess, when I recollect the Mexican tradition, that the original tribes came to their beautiful valley, after many years and vicissitudes of a dreary pilgrimage from the north, I have not thought it fanciful to believe, that they may have belonged to one of the two races described by Mr. Wirt, as extinct before the origin of the present Red Men of our forests and prairies. Wave after wave of the flowing tide of humanity may have beaten gradually along this Continent from north to south, each urging on the preceding. Tired of the hunter life at the inhospitable north, they wandered off to the south. A straggler now and then returned with a tale of the genial climate, shady groves, and prolific soil of the central regions;—and, thus, family after family, colony after colony, tribe after tribe, was induced to quit its colder homes, and settle in the south. As in the Old World, that south became the centre of civilization. Men were modified by climate. The rude savage, who depended upon the chase for subsistence at the north, and dwelt in caves or sheltered under the forest leaves, awoke to a new idea of life in his newer home. The energy of his character was not yet lost;—he saw the magical power of agriculture, and a new idea was revealed to him through its mysterious agency. There was no need of excessive toil in the fields or in the forests. His spirit became less warlike, and more social, as men congregated in populous neighborhoods. While in the north, the merest and fewest necessaries—his weapon, his breastwork, his fireplace, his cave for a dwelling, and a mound for a grave—sufficed the Indian, his whole purposes and instincts assumed a different character in the south.

The warrior and hunter loved the hardships taught him at the north, by his wandering habits from infancy;—but, the burning sun and milder climate of the south, while they inclined to peace and longevity, induced him to build tasteful and sheltering edifices for himself and his posterity. The adoration of his gods, became an enthusiasm, under more fervid skies;

* In Mr. Norman's work on Yucatan at page 218, there is a letter from Doctor Morton, the celebrated author of "Crania Americana," in which, after expressing his thankfulness to Mr. N. for the opportunity afforded him of examining certain bones brought from Yucatan, he observes, that, "dilapidated as they are, they, characters, as far as I can ascertain them, correspond with all the ostiological remains of that people which have hitherto come under my observation, and go to confirm the position, that all the American tribes (excepting the Esquimaux, who are obviously of Asiatic origin,) are of the same unmixed race. I have examined the skulls (now in my possession) of four hundred individuals belonging to tribes which have inhabited almost every region of North and South America, and I find the same type of organization to pervade and characterise them all.

"I much regret that we have in this country so few skulls of the Mongolian or Polar tribes of Northern Asia. These are all important in deciding the question whether the Aboriginal American race is peculiar and distinct from all others; a position which I have always maintained, and which I think will be verified when the requisite means of comparison are procured."

and the vow or the worship that were once offered in the recesses of groves, in the silence of dark woods, or on the mountain-top,—were here poured forth on the lofty pyramid, built by human hands and fashioned by human art.

Although we are left in this mystery as to the peopling of America, I think there is not so much doubt in regard to the inhabitants of Uxmal, Palenque, Copan, Chichen-Itza, and the various cities that have been described by Mr. Stephens.

According to Clavigero, a tribe, known as the Toltecs, left their home in the north, and, after a journey of emigration that lasted 104 years, (during which time they frequently tarried in certain places for years and months, erecting edifices and partially establishing themselves,) they, at length, reached the vale of Anahuac, a territory that subsequently became the seat of the Mexican Empire. At Tollan, or Tula, they founded the Capital of a dynasty, which lasted 384 years;—celebrated for its wisdom, knowledge, and extensive civilization. About 1051, (the tradition runs,) famine and pestilence nearly desolated the kingdom, and a great portion of those who escaped the ravages of disease emigrated immediately to Yucatan and Guatemala, leaving but a scattering remnant of this once flourishing empire in Tula and Cholula.

For one hundred years afterward Anahuac was nearly depopulated.

Then came an emigration of the Chichimecas, from the north, like the Toltecs, and from a place which they called Amaquemecan. These, too, intermingling with the Toltec remnants, had their reign among the ruins of the former empire,—dwelling, however, in small villages, and lacking all the elements of civilization.

Eight years after their advent to Anahuac, six tribes called the Nahuatlacks arrived, having left, at a short distance, a seventh, called Aztecs. Shortly afterward, they were joined by their missing tribe and by the Acolhuans, who are said to have emigrated from Teoacolhucan, near the original country of the Chichimecas. These were, undoubtedly, the most enlightened of all the wandering tribes who had penetrated these valleys since the days of the Toltecs, and they speedily formed an alliance with their ancient neighbors.

Of all these wanderers, however, we have now no traditions, except in relation to the Aztecs, who, departing from Azatlan in the north about the year 1160, continued their singular and weary pilgrimage, with frequent delays, until 1325; when, finding on a rock in a lake, the "Eagle on the Prickly Pear," (the omen to which they had been prophetically directed for the foundation of their future Capital,) they gathered together among the marshes of Tezcoco, and built the city of Tenochtitlan,—the Mexico of Cortéz. It is believed, both by Clavigero and Humboldt, that all these tribes of the Toltecs, Acolhuans, Chichimecas and Nahuatlacks, spoke the same language, and therefore, in all probability, emigrated from about the same degree of northern latitude.

Besides these tribes, there were others in the country at the period of the conquest. The Tarascos who inhabited Michoacan, the barbarous Ottomites, the Olmecs and Xicalancas, and Miztecas and Zapotecas;—the latter of whom are held, by Humboldt, to have been even superior to the Mexicans in point of civilization, and were probably antecedent, in the date of their emigration, to the Toltecs. In addition to this, you must bear in mind that the ancient Mexican Empire did not cover (as is usually supposed,) the whole of what is now the Republic of Mexico, or formerly New Spain. On the east, it was bounded by the river Coatzacualco; on the north, it did not extend farther than Tusapan; on the west, it was washed by the Pacific; and on the south, it reached, in all probability, to near the limits of what are now the provinces of Chiapas and Tobasco.*

You will recollect, that after the "pestilence and famine" that thinned the numbers of the Toltecs, the greater portion of the survivors emigrated to Yucatan and Guatemala; these were a highly civilized people,—living in houses, and building temples—to whom, perhaps, the Mexicans were indebted for the germ of their subsequent refinement. Is it not, then, highly probable, that the ancient ruins found by Mr. Stephens, scattered over Guatemala, Yucatan and Chiapas, were the palaces and temples of this wandering race? It strikes me, that no one can compare the unquestionably Toltec Vase found in the department of Tula, and described at page 108, the sculptures on the Stone of Sacrifice, at page 119; and in fact the general characteristics of all the sculpture, idols and figures heretofore represented, with those delineated by Mr. Catherwood, and doubt the identity or close connection between the people. We have every evidence of high civilization among the Mexicans, as you have observed in the preceding pages. They had temples, gods, gardens, magnificent dwellings, and all the paraphernalia of a splendid Empire. This Empire was in full power and glory at the period of the Spanish conquest. Its southern limit nearly bounded on Guatemala and Yucatan, and, with the most distant portion, there was, unquestionably, a communication kept up by the Capital. Why, then, may not the palaces of Uxmal, Palenque and Chiapas, have been inhabited, and their altars and temples used, as places of sacrifice in the days of Cortéz, as well as the heights of Chapultepec—or the Teocalli of Mexico?

The silence of contemporary historians in regard to the former cities of Yucatan and Guatemala, is no argument against their having been inhabited. The two best writers, Cortéz and Bernal Diaz, were soldiers, not antiquarians. They came for conquest, not research; and it is greatly to be regretted that a history of Guatemala, known to have existed a few years ago in that country, in the original manuscript of Diaz, (and which was once in the possession of Mr. Whitehead, of Mexico,) has been utterly lost in the turmoils and confusion of that country.

It seems to me impossible to believe that the Valley of Mexico was the *only* seat of refinement, taste, and luxury on the isthmus, or that so

* Vide Humboldt, Clavigero, and McCulloh.

powerful an Empire existed in all its splendor, while the pyramids, temples, palaces, and edifices which are represented in the plates accompanying these letters, were abandoned to the forest and its beasts. I cannot believe, that in so small a geographical space there could be such palpable anachronisms,—so much light in one spot with so much blackness next it;—that people, at the height of social and architectural refinement, should have had neighbors at the distance of 100, 200, or 300 miles, who were utter savages, while, a few degrees farther south, there was another stratum of known civilization in Peru.

I do not rely upon all the dates, assigned by Mexican historians, for the rise and fall of the Toltecs and Aztecs. There is doubt among the best writers on these subjects. The period, during which their emigration from the north continued, may be correct; but I question the accuracy of the time given for the commencement and spread of their respective monarchies, especially, when we remember the numbers who fell either in battle or under the sacrificial knife. The empires were exceedingly populous, and it would seem to have required centuries to gather all the population that existed in the vale of Anahuac after the ravages that terminated the Toltec sway. Besides this, the Mexicans rose to great refinement from absolute barbarism, or from the comparative ignorance and bad habits they had contracted during a long emigration. This requires time. The growth of nations is gradual. How long did it require to pile up the hill of Xochicalco—to dig its ditch of a league in extent—to quarry its immense stones—to bring them from their distant caves—to bear them to the summit of the mound—to pile them up in the several stories of the pyramid—and, lastly, to cover the whole with elaborate carving? How long did it require to prepare the mind of a nation, step by step, for the idea and construction of such an edifice;—which, we must remember, is but one out of thousands!

It is difficult to determine what might have been the extent of our knowledge of all the questions with which I began this letter, if the holy fathers, instead of making bonfires of Mexican records, had studied them with antiquarian zeal. Yet, I have at least satisfied myself, that if we know nothing of the *origin* of the people of America, we may at least be confident that Palenque, Uxmal, Copan, Mexico, Xochicalco, Teotihuacan, Cholula, Papantla, Tusapan, and Mitla, were the dwellings and temples of civilized nations at the period of the Spanish conquest. If ever the city of which Mr. Stephens heard, as existing among the mountains, (unvisited hitherto by white men,) is penetrated by some future band of adventurous travellers, the mystery may, perhaps, be solved. That such a city exists, I think by no means improbable, when it is recollected, that near the town of Cuernavaca, not more, perhaps, than seventy miles from the Capital of Mexico, *there is a populous and well governed Indian village, enjoying its native habits, and refusing to hold intercourse with the Spaniards.* How much more probable that there should be primitive tribes of which we have not the slightest information flour-

ishing with their original laws, customs, towns, and temples, among the folds of the distant mountains in the bosom of our unexplored Continent!*

NOTE.—The Mexican Cosmogony has four periods, when, it is alleged, that all mankind, with the exception of two or three individuals, perished.

The	1st	period was terminated by famine at the end of.....				4806 years.
"	2nd	"	"	fire	"	" 4394 "
"	3rd	"	"	hurricane	"	" 4010 "
"	4th	"	"	deluge	"	" 4008 "

In this deluge all perished, with the exception of *Coxcox*, and his wife *Xochiquetzal*, who escaped in a canoe.

I have already, at page 28, presented you an account of a Toltec legend, showing how one of the giants, called Xelhua, and his six brethren, were saved from the deluge on the mountain of Tlaloc, while all the rest of mankind perished in the waters or were transformed into fish.

Josephus, quoting from the 96th book of *Nicholas of Damascus*, says "there is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which, it is reported, that many who fled at the time of the deluge were saved; and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore on the top of it; and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved. This might be the man about whom Moses, the legislator of the Jews, wrote."

In the construction, form, and object of the Mexican *teocallis*, there is a striking analogy to the tumuli and pyramids of the old world. According to Herodotus, the temple of Belus was a pyramid, built of brick and asphaltum, solid throughout, (πυργος στερεος,) and it had eight stories. A temple (νεως) was erected on its top, and another at its base. In like manner, in the Mexican *teocallis*, the tower, (νεως) was distinguished from the temple on the platform; a distinction clearly pointed out in the letters of Cortés. Diodorus Siculus states, that the Babylonian temple served as an observatory to the Chaldeans; so, the Mexican priests, says Humboldt, made observations on the stars from the summit of the *teocallis*, and announced to the people, by the sound of the horn, the hour of the night. The pyramid of Belus was at once a temple and a tomb. In like manner, the *tumulus* (χωμα) of Calisto in Arcadia, described by Pausanias as a cone, made by the hands of man, but covered with vegetation, bore on its top the temple of Diana. The *teocallis* were also both temples and tombs; and the plain in which are built the houses of the sun and moon at Teotihuacan, is called the *path of the dead*. The group of pyramids at Gheeza and Sakkara in Egypt; the triangular pyramid of the queen of the Scythians, mentioned by Diodorus; the fourteen Etruscan, pyramids which are said to have been inclosed in the labyrynth of King Porsenna at Clusium: the tumulus of Alyattes at Lydia (see Modern Traveller, *Syria and Asia Minor*, vol. ii. p. 153;) the sepulchres of the Scandinavian king Gormus and his queen Daneboda; and the tumuli found in Virginia, Canada, and Peru, in which numerous galleries, built with stone and communicating with each by shafts, fill up the interior of artificial hills;—are referred to by the learned Traveller as sepulchral monuments of a similar character, but differing from the *teocallis* in not being, at the same time, surmounted with temples. It is perhaps too hastily assumed, however, that none of these were destined to serve as beam for altars; and the assertion is much too unqualified, that "the pagodas of Hindostan have nothing in common with the Mexican temples. That of Tanjore, notwithstanding that the altar is not at the top, bears a striking analogy in other respects to the *teocallis*."—See HUMBOLDT'S *Researches*, vol. i. pp. 81—107; *Pol. Essay*, vol. ii. pp. 146—149; *Mod. Traveller*, vol. vi. p. 241.

* Vide Appendix No. 3, at page 362, for a very interesting letter from Horatio Hale, Esq., on the connection of Indian languages.

LETTER XXVI.

CITY OF MEXICO. PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. PRISONS. PRISON STATISTICS. ACADEMY. PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.

We will return now from the edifices of Ancient Mexico, to the modern institutions and erections of the Spaniards, who have displaced the Indians.

I have already given you some descriptions of the City of Mexico, and the appearance and character of the castle-like dwellings of the people; but, (with the exception of the Cathedral,) I have as yet said nothing of the public edifices and churches.

There are two Palaces in the City of Mexico, one of which is appropriated to the Archbishop, and the other to the President and Government officers.

The Archbishop's Palace fronts the northern end of the President's, and is plain and simple both within and without. The same may be said of the National Palace; it has no architectural pretensions, and until the year 1842, was a long low pile of unadorned buildings, filled with a miserable collection of comfortless rooms. Upon the accession of General Santa Anna, however, a change took place. The Minister of Finance fitted up a suite of apartments for his *bureaux*, in a tasteful modern style; and, in the months of August and September, the Grand Sala was entirely completed, and opened to the public for the first time on the anniversary of the crowning victory of Mexican Independence.

In this spacious and well-proportioned apartment they have gathered a quantity of gorgeous furniture, and placed, on a platform at the northern end, under a crimson canopy, a magnificently carved and gilded *throne*. Various flags, alleged to have been taken from the Texans, in battle, are affixed to staffs extending from the cornice. The walls are covered with large French mirrors, and the deep windows are festooned with the most tasteful upholstery of French *artistes*. I have wandered over the whole of this immense pile of edifices, but I recollect nothing else about it worthy of notice. The private apartments of General Santa Anna are plain, neat, and tasteful, and a full-length portrait of General Washington adorns an obscure chamber.

In an inner court, to the eastward, is the Botanic Garden, surrounded by the lofty walls of adjoining edifices. It is of small extent, and the

poor flowers, shut up in the dreary inclosure, seem like so many beautiful nuns secluded for ever from the vulgar gaze. The chief gardener is a Roman—aged, he alleges, more than a century—who either knows little of his business, or has become useless by extreme age. He lives, like a hermit, in the shady nooks of his tangled and neglected garden, and amuses himself by pointing out to every visitor the greatest floral curiosity of the place—the celebrated Arbol Manita.

HAND FLOWER.

The almost unpronounceable Indian name is *Macpalxoch'quauhitl*, the botanic, *Chiranthodendron pentadactylon ;*—but it is usually known as the "*hand flower.*" Two trees only are said to exist in the Republic—one at Toluca and the other in the Capital;—and it is chiefly remarkable for the brilliancy of its tints, and the *claw* that protrudes from its thorny cup —a singular mingling of bird and blossom.

Behind the Palace are the Senate Chamber, and the Chamber of Deputies—both of them tasteful and comfortable apartments. The latter is of semicircular form, with a throne-like stage for the seat of the President on public occasions;—beneath its canopy are hung the Declaration of Independence, and the sword which Iturbidé first drew in defence

of Mexican liberty. The chairs of the members are ranged in two rows, rising one above the other against the walls of the semicircle, without desks; and above these, again, are lodges, or boxes supported by pillars, for the audience. A well executed picture of the Victory of Tampico, occupies a panel over the door in front of the throne; and on the table of the secretaries is placed the omnipresent crucifix.

The buildings of the MINT form the back of the palace square, and are filled with the old and cumbrous machinery of the last century. I saw none of the modern improvements which have been introduced both in Europe and in this country; but I cannot pass over this institution without doing justice to the artistical skill of the artist, who is at present engaged in making new dies for the future coinage of the Republic. The taste and talent of this young gentleman were discovered by some of the chiefs of Government, and he was immediately dispatched to Rome, whence, after a few years study, he has returned to honor his native Capital with the works of his graver.

I will say nothing of the old edifice of the Inquisition, with its vaulted rooms, its inner chambers, and its monastic gloom; or of the neighboring church of the Dominicans, in the court-yard of which you are still shown the hollow among the stones, wherein the stake was erected that sustained the victims of their former *auto's*. There is no longer an Inquisition, or a faggot.

Near this is the ADUANA—or Custom House—which, like the Diputacion, is a stately and commodious edifice. There are fourteen parish churches, six private churches, thirteen convents and seminaries for men, and twenty-two for women; six colleges, one university, and five hospitals and poor-houses.

MONTE PIO.

The MONTE PIO—a species of national pawnbroker establishment—is in the great Square, occupying the building known as the Palace of Cortéz, said to be erected on the ruins of the ancient Palace of Montezuma. This is one of the most beneficent institutions in the world, and was founded in 1775, by the Condé de Regla, who endowed it with about $300,000. Since that period it has been administered faithfully by the Government, and affords succor daily to more than two hundred persons. It is ruled by a general Board of Directors, and receives pledges of clothes, jewels, plate, and every species of valuables. These articles are appraised at a fair valuation, the amount of which (deducting the interest) is paid to the pawner;—they are then retained for six months, during which period the owner is at liberty to withdraw them upon repayment of the sum advanced. If the debt is not refunded at the end of that time, the pledges are disposed of at public sale; and if they bring more under

the hammer than the valuation, *the difference is given to their original owners.*

From the foundation of this admirable Institute—which has been the means of preventing so much disgrace and misery during the revolutionary difficulties of the Capital—2,232,611 persons had received succor up to the beginning of 1836. During the same period it had distributed $31,674,702, besides giving $134,746 in alms.

In the year 1837, it aided 29,629 persons by the distribution of $477, 772, and gave $1,089 for masses to be said daily by three chaplains, who received a dollar for each of their services.

You may form an idea of the number and variety of persons who derive assistance from the Monte Pio, by a walk through its extensive apartments. You will there find every species of garment, from the tattered reboso of the *lèpera* to the lace mantilla of the noble dame; every species of dress, from the blanket of the beggar, to the military cloak and jewelled sword of the impoverished officer; and, as to jewels, Aladdin would have had nothing to wish among the blazing caskets of diamonds for which the women of Mexico are proverbial.

MINERIA.

The MINERIA—or School of Mines—is one of the most splendid edifices in America. It was planned and built by Tolsa—the sculptor of the statue of Charles IV.—and is an immense pile of stone, with courts, stairways, saloons, and proportions that would adorn the most sumptuous palaces of Europe. But this is all. The apparatus is miserable; the collection of minerals utterly insignificant; the pupils few; and, among the wastes and solitude of the pile, wanders the renowned Del Rio—one of the most learned naturalists of this hemisphere—ejaculating his sorrows over the departed glory of his favorite schools.

An edifice used for the manufacture of tobacco, situated at the northwestern corner of the city, and erected by the old Spanish government, has been converted into a citadel. I never visited it, and can give no account of its interior.

ACCORDADA, OR PUBLIC PRISON.

Passing westward, toward the Paseo Nuevo from the Alameda, you cross the square in front of the ACORDADA, the common prison of the Capital. In the front of one of its wings a low-barred window is constantly open, and within, on an inclined plane, are laid the dead bodies found daily within the limits of the city. It is almost impossible to take your morning walk to the adjoining fields, without seeing one, and frequently two corpses, stretched bleeding on the stones. These are the victims of some sudden

quarrel, or unknown murder during the night; and all who miss a friend, a parent or a brother, resort to these iron bars to seek the lost one. It is painful to behold the scenes to which this melancholy assemblage frequently give rise, and hear the wails of sorrow that break from the homeless orphan, whose parent lies murdered on the stones of the dead-house.

Yet this is scarcely more shocking than the scenes presented by the *living*, within the walls of the loathsome prison. A strong guard of military is stationed at the gate, and you enter, after due permission from the commanding officer. A gloomy stair leads to the second story, the entrance to which is guarded by a portal massive enough to resist the assault of a powerful force. Within, a lofty apartment is filled with the officers of the prison and a crowd of subalterns, engaged in writing, talking, and walking—amid the hum of the crowd, the clank of chains, the shout of prisoners, and the eternal din of an ill-regulated establishment.

Passing through several iron and wood barred gates, you enter a lofty corridor, running around a quadrangular court-yard, in the centre of which, beneath, is a fountain of troubled water. The whole of this area is filled with human beings—the great congress of Mexican crime—mixed and mingling, like a hill of busy ants swarming from their sandy caverns. Some are stripped and bathing in the fountain; some are fighting in a corner; some making baskets in another. In one place a crowd is gathered around a witty story-teller, relating the adventures of his rascally life. In another, a group is engaged in weaving with a hand-loom. Robbers, murderers, thieves, ravishers, felons of every description, and vagabonds of every aspect, are crammed within this court-yard;—and, almost free from discipline or moral restraint, form, perhaps, the most splendid school of misdemeanor and villainy on the American Continent.

Below, within the corridor of the second story—from which I have described the view of this wretched mass of humanity—a rather better sort of criminals are kept; and yet, even here, many were pointed out to me as being under sentence of death, who still went about entirely without restraint.

In one corner of the quadrangle is the *chapel*, where convicts for capital offences are condemned to solitude and penance, during the three last days of their miserable life; and, at a certain hour, it is usual for all the prisoners to gather in front of the door, and chant a hymn for the victim of the laws. It is a solemn service of crime for crime.

I did not see the prison for the women, but I am told it is much the same as the one I have just described. About one hundred of the men, chained in pairs like galley slaves, are driven daily into the streets, under a strong guard, as scavengers; and it seems to be the chief idea of the utility of prisons in Mexico, to support this class of coerced laborers.

There can be no apology, at this period of general enlightenment in the world, for such disgraceful exhibitions of the congregated vice of a country. Punishment, or rather, incarceration, and labor on the streets, in the manner I have described, is, in fact, no sacrifice;—both because public

exhibition deadens the felon's shame, and because it cannot become an actual *punishment* under any circumstances of a lépero's life. Indeed, what object in existence can the lépero propose to himself? His day is one of precarious labor and income; he thieves; he has no regular home, or if he has, it is some miserable hovel of earth and mud, where his wife and children crawl about with scarce the instinct of beavers His food and clothing are scant and miserable. He is without education, or prospect of improvement. He belongs to a class that does not *rise*. He dulls his sense of present misery by intoxicating drinks. His quick temper stimulates him to quarrel. His sleep is heavy and unrefreshing, and he only rises to a day of similar uncertainty and wickedness. What, then, is the value of life to him, or to one like him? Why toil? Why not *steal?* What shame has he? *Is the prison, with certainty of food—more punishment than the free air, with uncertainty?* On the contrary, it is a *lighter* punishment; and as for the degradation, he knows not how to estimate it.

Mexico will thus continue to be infested with felons, as long as its prison is a house of refuge, and a comparatively happy home to so large a portion of its outcast population.*

I have collected some statistical information on these subjects, which I think will be interesting in connection with Mexican prisons, and prove how necessary it is, in the first place, to alter their whole system of coercive discipline; and, in the second, to strike immediately at the root of the evil, by improving the condition of the people—by educating, and proposing advantages to them, in the cultivation of the extensive tracts of country that now lie barren over their immense territory.

IMPRISONMENTS IN MEXICO FOR 1842.

During the first six months of 1842, there were imprisoned in the City of

Mexico,	3,197	men.
	1,427	women.
During the second six months,	2,858	men.
	1,379	women.
Total of both sexes for 1842,	8,861	

Without specifying *each* of the several crimes, for which these persons were committed to prison, or being able, from all the accounts furnished me, to state the exact number of those who were finally *convicted*, I will

* As an evidence of the little value these *léperos* place upon their lives,—an old resident in Mexico told me, that he had once been the witness of a street-fight between two women, which resulted in the use of knives, and the ripping of one's belly, so that her bowels were exposed. The wound was not fatal, and as soon as she had slightly recovered from the loss of blood, while the attendants were preparing a litter, she drew forth a *cigarrito* from her bosom, obtained a light from a bystander, and was borne off to the hospital, smoking as contentedly as if preparing for a *siesta!*

present some lists of the numbers imprisoned for the *chief* crimes, during the whole year.

	Men.	Women.	Total
1. Prostitution, adultery, bigamy, sodomy, incest,	312	179	491
2. Robbery, - - - - - - -	1,500	470	1,970
3. Quarreling and wounding, - - -	2,129	1,104	3,233
4. Quarreling, bearing arms, &c. - -	612	444	1,056
5. Homicide, attempt at do., and robbery and homicide,	70	17	87
6. Rape and incontinence, - - - - -	65	21	86
7. Forgery, - - - - - - -	7	1	8
8. Gambling, - - - - - - -	3	0	3
Which, added together, give the frightful amount of - -			6,934

males and females, for the *higher* crimes and misdemeanors—leaving a balance of 1,927 only, to be divided among the *lesser*. It should be stated, in addition to the above, that numbers were committed for *throwing vitriol* on the clothes and faces of persons passing along the street;—that 113 dead bodies were found;—17 individuals *executed*,*—and 894 sent to the hospital.

The sum of $4,121 is expended in salaries of officers for this Institution, and $30,232 for the support of the prisoners.

ACADEMY OF ARTS.

Let us pass from this examination of vice and immorality in Mexico, to something more agreeable.

My expectations had been greatly excited by the Baron Humboldt's account of the Academy of Fine Arts; but how greatly was I disappointed, in its comparatively miserable condition at present! It has shared the fate of the University, Museum, Mineria, and other public institutions. The halls are untenanted. The multitudes, described by the Baron as attending the instruction of Professors, and sketching from the splendid collections of antique casts,—have departed. One artist occupies an ill-arranged *studio* in a dark corner of the buildings, and paints stiff figures of formal officers in gold lace, embroidery and crosses, in a style as disagreeable as his manners.

* The mode of execution in Mexico, as in Spain, is by the *garrote*. The culprit is seated in a chair, and his neck is placed in an iron collar, which may be contracted by a screw. A sudden turn drives a spike through the spinal marrow at the same time that the collar closes round the throat of the victim. Life is almost immediately extinct, and the sufferings are consequently but trifling. The crowds, to see these executions, in Mexico, are innumerable.

According to Humboldt, there were in 1790, in all the prisons of Mexico, 770 of both sexes, for all crimes, out of a population of about 118,000.

It is to be hoped that with the "regeneration of the Republic," this branch of tasteful science will be properly encouraged, and the remarkably acute and *imitative* talents of the natives subjected to a discipline, that cannot fail to rank the Mexicans high in the grade of distinguished art.

The old Spanish government supplied this Institution with a revenue of near twenty-five thousand dollars a year; and, at an expense of forty thousand dollars, safely transported to Mexico over the rough mountain roads and passes, a beautiful collection of casts of the most renowned statues and groups of antiquity. These, I am glad to say, are altogether uninjured, and still adorn the lonely halls of the neglected Academy.

I asked for the *pictures* of the former scholars, and a few were shown me, bad in coloring and worse in outline. I asked for the *drawings;* and the answer was, that there were none but a few sketches hung along the walls, bearing the date of long passed years. Among them, however, I could not avoid noticing a drawing in ink by one of the pupils, which, had it been executed on copper, would have ranked him high in the list of the engravers of the period.

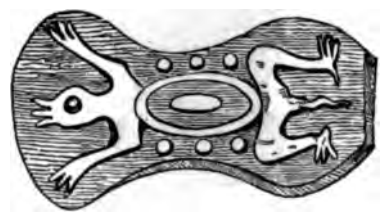
PRIVATE CABINETS.

The private collections of Mexico are not very numerous. Don José Gomez, ex-Conde de la Cortina, has a rare collection of offensive and defensive arms, ancient and modern, chronologically arranged. In addition to this, he has gathered a number of interesting memorials of his own country, together with some original pictures, and copies of the most distinguished artists of the Dutch, French, Flemish, Spanish and Italian schools. Among the painters are Murillo, Morales, Julio Romano, Paul Veronese, Salvator, Watteau, Mignard, David, and Laflond.

PEÑASCO'S COLLECTION.

The Museum of Don José Mariano Sanchez y Mora, ex-Conde del Peñasco, is comprised in four branches:—Antiquities, natural history, paintings, and instruments of the physical sciences. His collection of coins is extremely valuable, consisting of upward of three thousand specimens; and his mineralogical cabinet is unquestionably the rarest in the Republic. The ores—amethysts, emeralds, and diamonds, would, alone, almost make the fortune of an European collector.

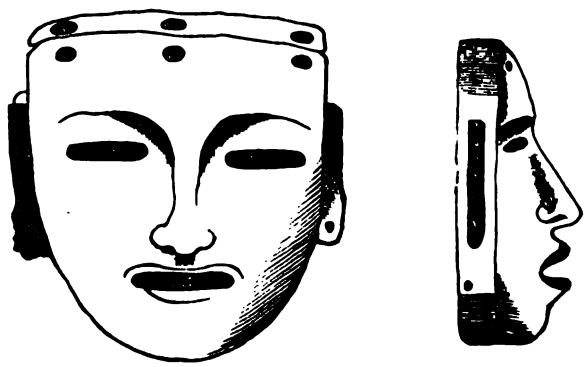
Don José was kind enough to permit me frequently to examine his Museum of Mexican Antiquities, and to present me with some rare and interesting idols. He possesses several Indian manuscripts in the ancient picture-writing, and a collection of *dii penates*, talismans, amulets, and musical instruments made of serpentine, basalt and clay.



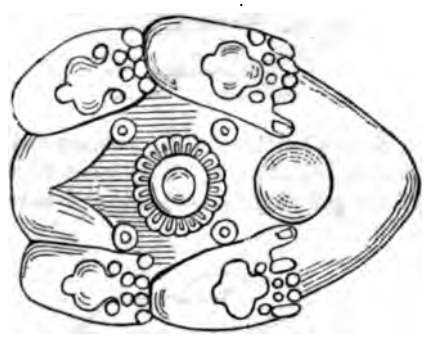
The abeve cuts represent two *stamps or seals* of baked clay, with which the Indians were accustomed to impress marks upon their cottons. They go far to prove how near these people were to the discovery of the art of printing.

In the National Museum and in the collection of the Conde, are several masks, made of obsidian, said to have been found in Indian tombs, covering the faces of skeletons, the remains, perhaps, of some of the illustrious dead of the Empire. The one here represented was found in the Department of Chiapas. When you recollect the exceedingly frail and glass-like material out of which these things are cut, you cannot fail to be struck with the skill and ingenuity of the person who contrived to work it into the semblance of human features, without fracturing the mass, and gave to the whole a *polish resembling that of the finest mirrors*. You will be the more surprised at this on looking at the following ring,

also made of obsidian, and but one-tenth of an inch in thickness. It is perfectly transparent, beautifully wrought, and apparently so brittle and thin, that the slightest blow would fracture it.



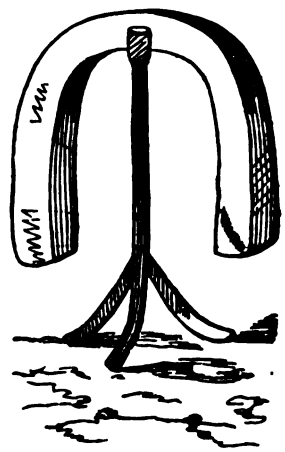
The above is also a mask, about a foot long, made, not of obsidian, but of serpentine. There are holes, as you perceive, in the upper part, which were doubtless used to suspend it before the face of some of the idols, according to one of the occasional rites of their worship. This mask is extremely interesting, because *it is a perfect profile of the present race of Indians*, who frequent the very spot at St. Jago de Tlaltelolco, where the relic was found.



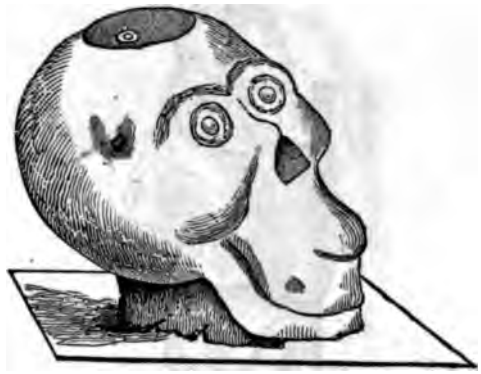
This is an idol found at Tula—the ancient capital of the Toltecs. The second figure represents the bottom of the statue, and the whole appears to have been a Toad or Frog—the croaking annoyer of some marshy neighborhood, who was raised to the dignity of a divinity in stone and propitiated by the offer of an occasional sacrifice.

And so, perhaps, was the Grasshopper in the following figure, found in the Capital, cut out of red marble and beautifully polished. It is said to be the god of Chapultepec—the "hill of the Cicala."

The next is a Sacrificial Yoke, similar to the one described at page 121.



The two following figures are those of Serpents, ten and nineteen inches in diameter—and carved from basalt. They were no doubt connected with the worship of the god Quetzalcoatl, which I have heretofore described to you.



The preceding are four figures of unknown idols. One seems to rep resent a deformed Dwarf; another, a gaping Baboon; the third is a monkey's or Idiot's head, cut out of white marble, found some years since in the Misteca; and the fourth is a mutilated body neatly carved in ser. pentine.

But the finest idol-specimen contained in the Conde's gallery, is the next that I have delineated. It was brought to him from Oajaca, the an. cient country of Mitla and the Zapotecs—lying southwestwardly from the Valley of Mexico—and is beautifully carved from a white sandstone, similar, I think, in material, to those found farther south by Mr. Stephens

You cannot fail to notice the tasteful arrangement of the head-dress, resembling those of our Indians as exhibited in the following designs, taken, for the sake of illustration, from the work of Mr. Catlin.

In the first figure, you will observe feathers depending from the crest and back, similar to *those on the sculptures of Xochicalco and Palenque;* and, in the second, you will perceive that they are arranged in a circle of rays, so as to be seen in front, as on the statue from Oajaca. Another thing is interesting in these figures of our Northern Indians. On the robe of the first Indian is *an open hand.* This, too, has been the subject of great speculation by recent writers. Mr. Stephens found it constantly in the temples he explored. It is in several places on the sides of the "gladiatorial stone," at page 124 of these letters; and Mr. Schoolcraft (unquestionably the best informed of our Indian scholars,) regards it as emblematic of *strength, courage and power.*

The figure in the collection of the Conde del Peñasco, is a deity connected with the Indian notions of fruition or plenty. The ears of corn in the head-dress indicate this idea, while the whole, perhaps, may be an idol of *Centeotl, the "goddess of the Earth and Grain,"* or, (as she was more confidingly called,) "she who supports us."

I had just finished sketching the idols represented in the preceding plates, when I was called to the window by the noise of a crowd below, gathered around a man lying on his back. I presumed it to be one of the numberless street-fights or quarrels with which you are daily annoyed in this Capital, and was about retiring, when the fellow suddenly raised his legs in the air—balanced himself by his shoulders—and, pitching up a pole horizontally, caught it on his feet.

This, too, was a remnant of antiquity, and having sketched the exhibitor alongside of an idol, I do not think him out of place in this letter.

The ancient Mexicans had a variety of similar sports;—such as balancing on each other's shoulders; on staves; and on wheels whirling in the air; but this exercise, with the pole or beam, was perhaps the most

common of all, and ordinarily practiced, in the streets, as a decent mode of begging.

The operator is usually stripped to his trowsers, and his capital in trade consists of a pair of stout thighs and muscular calves. The pole once balanced on the soles of his feet, he plays all manner of tricks with it as easily as if it were in his hands; but I have never seen them sport, as the ancients are said to have done, *with men seated on each end of the heavy bar.*

AGAVE AMERICANA.

LETTER XXVII.

DESAGUA. CARRIAGES. MULES. TROOPS. MUSIC. OPERA. RECRUITS. THEATRES. MEXICAN THIEVES. THE JUDGE AND TURKEY.

Mexico, lying in the lap of a valley, with mountains around it continually pouring their streams into the sandy soil, has been frequently in danger of returning to the "slime from whence she rose." Since the trees have been cut from the plains and the surface exposed to the direct action of the sun, the valley has become drier and the lake has shrunk; but Mexico has, nevertheless, been several times threatened with inundations.

In estimating the dangerous situation of the Metropolis, it is necessary for you to recollect the position and levels of the adjacent lakes. Southeastwardly is the lake of Chalco; northwestwardly the lake of Tezcoco; and north of that again, in a continuous chain, are the lakes of San Cristoval and Zumpango. The latter sheet of water is about eighteen feet *higher* than San Cristoval,—San Cristoval is twelve feet *higher* than Tezcoco,—and the level of the great Square of Mexico is not more than three feet above that of Tezcoco. Thus, the head of water which could be easily poured over the Capital is immense, especially as the river Cuautitlan pours an additional stream constantly into the northern link of the chain at Zumpango. In 1629 the whole city of Mexico, with the exception of the Plaza, was laid waste by inundation. In most of the streets the water continued for upward of three years, and, until 1634, portions of the town were still traversed by canoes.

So great was the misery and want caused by this misfortune, that the Court of Spain had issued orders to abandon the Capital and build a new one, between Tacuba and Tacubaya, on upland levels, that had never been reached by the lakes before the conquest. An earthquake, however, rent the earth and freed the city of the accumulated waters; and the result of this warning was the completion of an immense Desagua or sewer, which thoroughly empties the ordinary contents of the valley. But urgent as was the necessity for this work, it was procrastinated by the dilatoriness of Mexican laborers, until the year 1789. "The whole length of the cut," is said by Mr. Ward, "to be, from the sluice called Vertideros, to the *salto* of the river Tula, 67,537 feet; where the waters are discharged at a spot about 300 feet beneath the level of the lake of Zum-

TERMINATION OF AN AQUEDUCT IN MEXICO.

pango." The estimate of the whole cost of this gigantic enterprise, and its necessary repairs, until the year 1830, is $8,000,000; yet, with all the expenditure and vast labor, it may still prove, in certain cases, only efficacious against a *portion* of the waters that are collected in the valley. South of the Capital are the lakes of Chalco and Xochimilco, and their level is *more than a yard higher* than that of the great Square of Mexico.

This Desague, and the noble aqueducts by which the city is supplied, are the only very great enterprises, of this character, in the country; and they are all owing to the energy of the old Spanish government, which emulated the magnificence of the Romans in its public improvements, connected with elegance and comfort. During the royal sway the roads, also, were properly made and repaired; but since the Revolution, when most of them were torn up to prevent the passage of troops, or destroyed by the transit of artillery, they have been abandoned to the weather and travel, so that in fact, (with the exception of the highway to Vera Cruz, which has recently been improved,) there is scarcely a road in the Republic that does not resemble more the deserted bed of a mountain stream, than a work intended to facilitate communication. The idea of "internal improvements" has never entered into the calculation of these people;—though, some years since, a scheme was set on foot to construct a railway from the coast to the Capital, and its practicability proved by a scientific *reconnoissance*. Adventures of this character will be the first evidences of the growth of mind among the masses in Mexico, when they are taught to believe that they have other sources of wealth besides mines, and that riches do not consist *alone* in gold and silver. Until that period, the patient and toilsome mule will continue to be the means of transportation of the chief burdens from the sea to the interior.

If we suppose it to be perfectly practicable to make a railway of about 350 miles in length, with all its sinuosities, from Vera Cruz to the Capital, I think the following estimate may be reasonably made of the profits of such an enterprise; especially, when it is recollected that the distance will be passed in less than 24 hours, instead of *four days*, (as at present in the diligence,) and from *eighteen to twenty-five days*, by mules and wagons.

Cost of Railway, say, - - - - -	$6,000,000
Motive power, cars, &c. - - - - -	200,000
Contingent expenses, - - - - -	300,000
	$6,500,000

The interest on which, per annum, at 6 per cent. will be $390,000

It may be estimated, that about fifty thousand tons are imported annually into Vera Cruz. A ton weight is transported usually on about seven mules, each mule load being worth $25, from Vera Cruz to Mexico.

Fifty thousand tons will then cost for transportation $8,750,000. But suppose we take only the half, or twenty-five thousand tons to be transported to the *interior*, and we shall have for the cost, $4,375,000, for the annual value of mule freight.

I think it would be perfectly fair to consider this sum as the income of a railway, (at least, during the first years of the enterprise,) especially when the transportation of passengers and the *speed* with which merchants will be served with their goods, are taken into consideration as inducements.

The statement of freights which I have made above, is only of carriage *to* the Capital; an equal sum, nearly, may be expected to cover the transportation *from* it, including passengers, and pay for the portage of coin and bullion to the coast. But, if nothing more than $4,375,000, in all, are raised as income, you will perceive that the road must pay for itself in less than two years, or yield (after deducting expenses,) more than thirty per cent. to its shareholders. If the low cost of the railway is objected to, let the estimate be doubled, and still the profits will be proportionably great, if we take into account the extension of business that will be created by the increase of facilities.

I think it may be safely stated, that two thousand passengers pass over the road every year between Vera Cruz and Mexico, each paying $50 for his seat, or, $100,000 in all. How great would be the increase of travelling—the security of life and property from robbers—the inducements to trade—and the general promotion of the prosperity of the Republic, by an outlay of money at so profitable an interest![*]

MEXICAN COACHES AND MULES.

Not the least singular of the sights of the Metropolis, are the mules harnassed to the antique vehicles still used by some of the old-fashioned folks of Mexico. The carriage is usually quite globular, or tun-like, with its doors and sides covered with elaborate gilding and painting. This clumsy cavity is suspended on a carved and gaudy-colored framework, or square scaffolding, resting on enormous wheels; and the whole machine has the appearance of a big fly hanging in the midst of a spider-web. A long pole extends in front, to which are attached a pair of mules, almost hidden in a heavy harness studded with brass bosses and shining ornaments, while the tails of the luckless animals are invariably stuck into leathern bags by way of queue! A postillion, with short jacket, of brown stamped leather, embroidered with green braid; stout leggings,

[*] Since the above was written, I learn that the Government has issued orders for the repair and improvement of roads all over the Republic. An enterprize has been actually set on foot by Mexican merchants of great wealth and respectability, to open a communication with the Pacific, across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, partly by railway.

The railway from Vera Cruz to the river San Juan, in the direction of Jalapa, has also been commenced, and laborers are already at work on four miles of the twenty-one of which it is to consist.

spurs with two-inch rowels; broad-brimmed hat, and whip of sounding thong, bestrides one of the beasts; and the whole apparatus moves off with a slow lumbering pace, that resembles in motion and appearance nothing that I can now recollect, but one of those old-fashioned wooden houses, that, in times long past, we used to see removed from street to street, until they disappeared in the suburbs.

Even the riding horses of the Mexicans are not yet freed from the ancient lumber and trappings with which their ancestors covered them. At page 163, you will find a picture of a Mexican horseman, and observe that the animal's haunches are covered with a sort of hemisphere of leather terminated by an iron fringe, that jingles with every movement. This cumbrous hide was originally designed, at the period of the conquest, as an armor for the protection of the horse from Indian arrows, while the guard was continued in front of the beast by a similar apron that shielded his neck and throat. But now, although there are no more assailants of the peaceful riders, you may still frequently observe this uncouth covering on the finest animals; and the apology for the usage is, that by continually striking on a certain part of his hind legs with the lower fringe of iron, the horse is forced into a short, ambling trot, which is held to be the *summum bonum* of Mexican comfort in the saddle. I confess, that I saw no beauty in the mincing gate which is thus acquired, especially as the animal most celebrated for it in Mexico scarcely advanced a dozen yards in a minute, while, from the amount of exercise he appeared to be taking, and the incessant pawing of his feet and chafing of his bit, an observer would be induced to believe he was advancing at a furious pace. It is one of those capricious luxuries to which men resort, when they have exhausted the round of natural and simple tastes.

I have forgotten to say anything to you hitherto of the parades of troops, for which this Capital is in some degree famous. As I profess to have no military knowledge, you must not expect a very critical account of their appearance or manœuvres; but I have seldom seen better looking regiments in Europe than the 11th Infantry, under the command of Lombardini. The uniform is white, like the Austrian, and is kept in excellent order. The arms are clean and bright, and the officers of division appear to be well trained, and to have imparted their training to the men. On the 13th of June 1842, about eight thousand of these troops were brought together, to be reviewed by General Santa Anna, on the meadows south of the city. In line they had an extremely martial bearing, and, so far as I was able to judge of their skill, the sham-fight that took place afterward was admirably executed. Excellent and daring riders, as are all the Mexicans, they must ever have a decided advantage in their cavalry; and, although they do not present so splendid an appearance in equipments as some of the other regiments, I have no doubt they constitute the most effective arm of the Mexican service. Indeed, almost all the foreigners and even Texans, with whom I have spoken in regard to

the qualities of these men, concur in a high estimate of the Mexican soldier, although they do not think so well of the Mexican officer. This, in all probability, arises from the irregular manner in which persons arrive at command and the want of soldierlike education and discipline. Officers have been, most frequently, taken at once from private life or pursuits by no means warlike, and found themselves suddenly at the head of troops, without a knowledge of their duties, either in the barrack, camp, or field, or a due estimate of the virtues of obedience, and that disciplined courage arising from a perfect self-reliance in every emergency. The result of this unfortunate state of things has been, that, in conflicts with the Texans, while the men have often appeared anxious to fight, they lacked officers who were willing to lead them into the thick of the *mêlée*.

You can fancy nothing more odd, than the manner in which this army is recruited. A number of men are perhaps wanted to complete a new company, and a sergeant with his guard is forthwith dispatched to inspect the neighboring Indians and Meztizos. The subaltern finds a dozen or more at work in the fields; and, without even the formality of a request, immediately picks his men and orders them into the ranks. If they attempt to escape or resist, they are at once *lassoed;* and, at nightfall, the whole gang is marched, tied in pairs, into the *cuartel* of the village or the guardroom of the Palace, with a long and lugubrious procession of wives and children, weeping and howling for the loss of their martial mates. Next day the "volunteers" are handed over to the drill-sergeant; and I have often laughed most heartily at the singular group presented by these new-caught soldiers, on their first parade under their military tutor. One half of their number are always Indians, and the rest, most likely, léperos. One has a pair of trowsers, but no shirit; another a shirt and a pair of drawers; another hides himself, as well as he can, under his blanket and broad-brimmed hat; another has drawers and a military cap. But the most ridiculous looking object I remember to have seen in Mexico, was a fat and greasy lépero, who had managed to possess himself of a pair of trowsers that just reached his hips, and were kept up by a strap around his loins, together with an old uniform coat a great deal too short for him both in the sleeves and on the front. As he was not lucky enough to own a shirt, a vast continent of brown stomach lay shining in the sun between the unsociable garments! He held his head, which was supported by a tall stock, higher than any man in the squad, and marched magnificently—especially in "lock step!"

The drilling of these men is constant and severe. The sergeant is generally a well-trained soldier, and unsparing in the use of his long hard rod for the slightest symptom of neglect. In a few weeks, after the new troops acquire the ordinary routine of duty, they are put into uniform, paraded through the streets, and you would scarcely believe they ever had

been the coarse Indians, and scurvy léperos, who robbed you on the road or pilfered your pockets in the streets.

It would be improper, in speaking of the Mexican military, not to notice, especially, their excellent bands of music. The Spaniards transplanted their love and taste for this beautiful science to Mexico. The Indians have caught the spirit from their task-masters;—and whether it be in the tinkling guitar or the swelling harmonies of a united corps, you can scarce go wrong, in expecting an exhibition of the art from a native. It is the custom for one of the regimental bands to meet after sundown, under the windows of the Palace, in the Plaza, which is filled with an attentive crowd of eager listeners to the choicest airs of modern composers.

I have said, that this musical taste pervades all classes; and it was, therefore, to be hoped, that a regularly established Operatic corps would have readily succeeded in the Capital. But from a variety of causes the experiment failed. The Revolution of 1841, interfered with it at the outset, in the months of August and September; and, from the unfavorable location of the house, and other circumstances, the whole enterprise was visited with a series of disastrous losses that left the management, in July, 1842, with a deficit of upward of 32,000 dollars. The singers were good; the prima donna (Madame Castellan,) and basso, unexceptionable; but the establishment never became fashionable.

Not so, however, with the Theatres;—*three* of which were almost constantly in operation while I resided in Mexico. The "Principal," the resort of the old aristocracy, was the theatre of staid fashion;—the "Nuevo Mexico," a haunt of the newer people, who looked down on the "legitimate drama," and tolerated the excitement of innovation and novelty;—and the "Puente Quebrada," a species of San Carlino, where "the people" revelled in the coarser jokes and broader scenes of an *ad libitum* performance.

I frequently visited the Principal, but kept a box with several young friends at the Nuevo Mexico, where I found the greatest advantage in the study of the Spanish language, from the excellent recitations of the "comicos." Most of them were Castillians, who spoke their native tongue with all the distinctive niceties of pronunciation, besides producing all the newest efforts of the Spanish muse.

It was singular to observe, how from a small beginning and really excellent performances, the taste and wealth of Mexico was gradually drawn from its old loves at the Principal to the daring upstart. I have elsewhere told you that the theatre is a Mexican necessary of life. It is the legitimate conclusion of a day, and all go to it;—the old, because they have been accustomed to do so from their infancy; the middle aged, be-

cause they find it difficult to spend their time otherwise; and the young for a thousand reasons which the young will most readily understand.

The boxes are usually let by the month or year, and are, of course, the resort of families who fill them in full dress every evening, and use them as a receiving-room for the *habitués* of their houses; although it is not so much the custom to visit in the theatre as in Italy.

The pit is the paradise of bachelors. Its seats are arm-chairs, rented by the month, and of course never occupied but by their regular owners. The stage is large, and the scenery well painted; but the whole performance becomes rather a sort of mere *repetition* than *acting*, as the "comicos" invariably follow the words, uttered in quite a loud tone by a prompter, who sits in front beneath the stage with his head only partially concealed by a wooden hood. A constant reliance on this person, greatly impairs the dramatic effect, and makes the whole little better than bad reading; but I was glad to perceive that the actors of Nuevo Mexico had evidently studied their parts, and really performed the characters of the best dramas of the Spanish school.

I cannot but think this habitual domestication at the theatre, is injurious to the habits of the Mexicans. It makes their women live too much abroad, and cultivates a love of admiration. The dull, dawdling morning at home, is succeeded by an evening drive; and that, again, by the customary seat at the Opera or Play-house, where they listen to repetitions of the same pieces, flirt with the same cavaliers, or play the graceful with their fans. If the entertainments were of a highly intellectual character, or a development of the loftier passions of the soul, (as in the master-pieces of our English school,) there would be some excuse for an indulgence of this national taste; but the disposition of the audiences is chiefly directed, either toward comedy, or to a vapid melodrama in the most prurient style of the modern French. Love and murder,—crime and wickedness,—have converted the stage into a dramatic Newgate, where sentimental felons and beautiful females, whose morality is as questionable as the color of their cheeks, are made by turns to excite our wonder and disgust.

MEXICAN ROGUERY.

When giving you an account, the other day, of Mexican prisons and prisoners, I forgot to relate some anecdotes that are told in the Capital of the adroitness of native thievery.

Some time since, an English gentleman was quietly sauntering along the Portales—the most crowded thoroughfare of Mexico—his attention

being occupied with the variety of wares offered for sale by the small dealers;—when, suddenly, he felt his hat gently lifted from his head. Before he could turn to seize the thief, the rascal was already a dozen yards distant, dodging through the crowd.

Upon another occasion, a Mexican was stopped in broad daylight, in a lonely part of the town, by three men, who demanded his cloak. Of course, he very strongly objected to parting with so valuable an article; when two of them placed themselves on either side of him, and the third, seizing the garment, immediately disappeared, leaving the victim in the grip of his companions.

His cloak gone, he naturally imagined that the thieves had no further use for him, and attempted to depart. The vagabonds, however, told him to remain patiently where he was, and he would find the result more agreeable than he expected.

In the course of fifteen minutes their accomplice returned, and politely bowing, handed the gentleman a *pawnbroker's ticket!*

"We wanted thirty dollars, and not the cloak," said the villain; "here is a ticket, with which you may redeem it for that sum, and as the cloak of such a *Caballero* is unquestionably worth at least a hundred dollars, you may consider yourself as having made *seventy* by the transaction! *Vaya con Dios!*"

A third instance of prigging, is worthy the particular attention of the London swell mob; and I question if it has been surpassed in adroitness, for some time past, in that notorious city, where boys are regularly taught the science of thieving, from the simple pilfer of a handkerchief, to the compound abstraction of a gold watch and guard-chain.

A TALE OF A TURKEY.

As a certain learned Judge in Mexico, some time since, walked one morning into Court, he thought he would examine whether he was in time for business; and, feeling for his repeater—found it was not in his pocket.

"As usual," said he to a friend who accompanied him, as he passed through the crowd near the door—"As usual, I have again left my watch at home under my pillow."

He went on the bench and thought no more of it. The Court adjourned and he returned home. As soon as he was quietly seated in his parlor, he bethought him of his timepiece, and turning to his wife, requested her to send for it to their chamber.

"But, my dear Judge," said she, "I sent it to you three hours ago!"

"Sent it to me, my love? Certainly not."

"Unquestionably," replied the lady, "and by the person *you sent for it!*"

"The person *I* sent for it!" echoed the Judge.

"Precisely, my dear, *the very* person you sent for it! You had not left home more than an hour, when a well-dressed man knocked at the door and asked to see me. He brought one of the very finest turkies I ever saw, and said, that on your way to Court you met an Indian with a number of fowls, and having bought this one, quite a bargain, you had given him a couple of *reals* to bring it home; with the request that I would have it killed, picked, and put to cool, as you intended to invite your brother judges to a dish of *mollé* with you to-morrow. And, 'Oh! by the way, Señora,' said he, 'his Excellency, the Judge, requested me to ask you to give yourself the trouble to go to your chamber and take his watch from under the pillow, where he says he left it, as usual, this morning, and send it to him by me.' And, of course, *mi querido*, I did so."

"You did?" said the Judge.

"Certainly," said the lady.

"Well," replied his Honor, "all I can say to you, my dear, is, that you are as great a *goose*, as the bird is a turkey. You've been robbed, madam;—the man was a thief;—I never sent for my watch;—you've been imposed on;—and, as a necessary consequence, the confounded watch is lost for ever!"

The trick was a cunning one; and after a laugh, and the restoration of the Judge's good-humor by a good meal, it was resolved actually to have the turkey for to-morrow's dinner, and his Honor's brothers of the bench to enjoy so dear a morsel.

Accordingly, after the adjournment of Court next day, they all repaired to his dwelling, with appetites sharpened by the expectation of a rare repast.

Scarcely had they entered the *sala* and exchanged the ordinary salutations, when the lady broke forth with congratulations to his Honor upon the *recovery of his stolen watch!*

"How happy am I," exclaimed she, "that the villain was apprehended!"

"Apprehended!" said the Judge, with surprise.

"Yes; and doubtless convicted, too, by this time," said his wife.

"You are always talking riddles," replied he. "Explain yourself, my dear. I know nothing of thief, watch, or conviction."

"It can't be possible that I have been *again* deceived," quoth the lady, "but listen:—

"About one o'clock to-day, a pale, and rather interesting young gentleman, dressed in a seedy suit of black, came to the house in great haste —almost out of breath. He said that he was just from Court;—that he was one of the clerks;—that the great villain who had the audacity to steal your Honor's watch had just been arrested;—that the evidence was nearly perfect to convict him;—and all that was required to complete it was '*the turkey*,' which must be brought into Court, and for that he had been sent with a porter by your express orders."

"And you gave it him!"

"Of course I did—who could have doubted or resisted the *orders of a Judge!*"

"Watch—and turkey—both gone! pray, what the devil, madam, are we to do for a dinner?"

But the lady had taken care of her guests, notwithstanding her simplicity, and the party enjoyed both the joke and their viands.

LETTER XXVIII.

MEXICAN CHARACTER.

I HAVE adverted already in previous letters to the private character and domestic customs of the Mexicans, and confess, that I came to the country with opinions anything but favorable to the morals, tastes, or habits of the people. It was alleged, that they entertained a positive antipathy to foreigners, and that the exclusive system of Spain, under which they were educated, had excited in them a distaste for innovation; an *insouciant* contentment with the "statu quo;" and, in fact, had created in our New World a sort of China in miniature.

I think it exceedingly reasonable, that the Mexicans should be shy of foreigners. They have been educated in the strict habits of the Catholic creed; they know no language but their own; the customs of their country are different from others; the strangers who visit them are engaged in the eager contests of commercial strife; and, besides being of different religion and language, they are chiefly from those northern nations, whose tastes and feelings have nothing kindred with the impulsive dispositions of the ardent south. In addition to the selfish spirit of gain that pervades the intercourse of these visitors, and gives them no character of permanency or sympathy with the country, they have been accustomed to look down on the Mexicans with contempt for their obsolete habits, without reflecting, that they were not justly censurable for traditional usages which they had no opportunity of improving by comparison with the progress of civilization among other nations.

Yet, treating these people with the frankness of a person accustomed to find himself at home wherever he goes, avoiding the egotism of national prejudices, and meeting them in a spirit of benevolence; I have found them kind, gentle, hospitable, intelligent, benevolent, and brave. Among their better classes, no people see more clearly than they do the vices of an ill-regulated society and the misery of their political condition; but, when rebuked in the presumptuous and austere spirit of arrogant strangers, they repel the rudeness by distance and reserve. The consequence is, that these disturbers of social decency are seldom the chosen friends or inmates of their dwellings. The Mexicans are a proud

and *sensitive* people; yet, none are more easily subdued by kindness—none more easily won by a ready disposition to mingle in their ranks, and treat them with a due respect for their habitudes and their prejudices.

There may be other reasons, too, why Mexicans have been jealously shy of strangers. It seems impossible for them to get rid of the idea, that European powers are seeking to obtain their wealth and territory, and to reëstablish the systems from which they freed themselves by so many years of revolutionary war; nor can they (since the Texan war,) divest themselves of the erroneous notion, that the United States has ever a longing eye on their Capital and country.

There are but few entertainments given in Mexico, in comparison with those of other cities abroad, where a lavish expenditure in viands, lights, and amusements for the few hours of a single evening, are mistaken for the elegancies and refinements of genuine hospitality;—instead, however, of these ostentatious displays, there are frequent reunions at *tertulias*, where an hour or two are most agreeably spent in friendly intercourse, and the unrestrained flow of pleasant and instructive conversation.

I have already alluded to the extreme of fashionable life, and its disposition for the theatre; and I do not intend to treat again of the propensity of the *ultras* to living thus constantly in the public eye, without devoting a portion of each day to that domestic intercourse and reunion which make the comfort and beauty of an English or American fireside. I speak, however, of that *juste milieu* of society, wherein resides the virtue and intellect of a country; and I had an excellent opportunity of judging of the private life of this class during my stay in the Capital.

It was my good fortune to reside for more than half a year in a native family, once rich and titled, but broken in fortunes by the political and commercial vicissitudes of the Republic, and it was there that I constantly witnessed the most beautiful evidences of a filial devotion and parental love, amounting almost to passionate attachment. The lady at the head of the establishment, (as I remarked in a preceding letter,) was a person who had been distinguished for her talents and accomplishments in the days when Mexico was adorned with the splendor of a Spanish court. She would have been considered highly cultivated in any country; her manners were excellent; her bearing graceful and courteous; and a wide circulation in her youth among distinguished men, (both before and during the Revolution,) and a ready talent for imparting her recollections, made her conversation delightful and instructive. Besides this, she possessed a genius for miniature painting and sketching in crayons, rarely attained by a female, and worthy of a distinguished artist. Qualities, like these, brought around her constantly a large and intelligent circle of both sexes. The change of fortune had by no means diminished her estimation in society, and the numbers of fast friends who adhered to

her in her comparative indigence, proved their admiration of talent, and the constancy of attachment, by the repetition of the most delicate and disinterested assiduities.

It was in this Mexican *home*, and not from the unsympathizing distance of the hotel and ball-room, (the scene of most travellers' observation,) that I obtained my insight into the structure of Mexican society and character. Had I kept myself aloof in my own house or my own inn, as is the habit of foreigners, I should have judged from the theatre, the passéo, the bull-ring, the cock-pit, and the gaming-table; that the women were but so many painted dolls, without more education or soul than was required to languish over a love-sick play, or to ogle, with idle gaze, a favored cavalier. I might have supposed, too, that the men were supremely blessed by this dalliance with the sex, and considered themselves in perfect elysium when they could divide their attention between their sirens, their horses, and the card-table;—but in the privacy of this dwelling, I learned to estimate the love and regard between parents and children; the beautiful benevolence of ancient friendship; the universal respect for genius; and, besides, had frequent occasion to notice the expanding spirit, ardent patriotism, desire of cultivation, and quick talent, which embellish the Mexican character.

It must not be said that I am estimating a country by one example;—I am as far from so partial a judgment, as the opponents of Mexico are from a just one on their side of the question. It is true, that this family afforded me an extensive field of observation, but it chiefly served to stimulate my attention and inquiries elsewhere; and I can frankly declare, that wherever I observed, I invariably found the same qualities of head and heart. It is this *heart* that is in fact the great characteristic of Mexicans, and especially of their females. There is a noble naturalness, an antique generosity about them, which is the parent of a multitude of virtues, and it is by an abandonment of themselves to *impulses*, that so much irregularity and indiscretion have been frequently manifested, both in politics and society.

I have said that the Mexicans are a people of quick talent, and my remark is borne out by the observation of all foreigners. They are quick to apprehend, quick of study, and quick in mastering a subject; but this very facility, joined with their impulsiveness, is often fatal to their enduring application and progress.

I came among these people an entire stranger, without especial claims on their attention, and studious to avoid that bill of exchange hospitality, which is the result of introductory letters from former, and, perhaps, forgotten acquaintances. Yet mingling freely among all classes, and comparing them now—when gratitude for acts of kindness has been long yielded and the annoyance of petty impertinences forgotten—I have none but kindly recollections of the people, and none but favorable impressions

of the mass of a society, in which I had been taught to believe that I should be held in utter antipathy as a heretical stranger.

There are, of course, in Mexico as in all other countries, specimens of egotism, selfishness, haughtiness, ill-breeding, and loose morals, both among the men and the women; but, although we find these floating-like bubbles on the *top* of society, they must not therefore be considered the characteristics of the country. You must separate from the multitude the few who sometimes lead and control the masses that do not wish to come in contact or conflict with them. A nation in which "revolutions and counter-revolutions are events of almost daily occurrence, is naturally prolific in desperate and crafty political adventurers," and dissimulation and stratagem may, in time, form the chief element of the character of such a people,—yet such, it is hoped, is not to be the corrupting fate of Mexico.

The idea that large social entertainments require great magnificence and lavish expense, deprives the Mexicans, in their towns, of many of those agreeable gatherings which fill up so pleasantly our winter nights and autumn evenings; but it is on their haciendas or plantations, that their hospitality is most distinguished. As you had occasion to remark in the account of my journey to the *tierra caliente*, nothing is withheld from you;—their establishments are placed at your entire control, and the welcome is as sincere as it is hearty and cheerful.

That they are brave, none will doubt who read the history of their War of Independence; although the bad discipline (especially of their officers,) has prevented the very eminent exhibition of this quality in their foreign battles. In fact, regard them in any way, and they will be found to possess the elements of a fine people who want but peace and the stimulus of foreign emulation, to bring them forward among the nations of the earth with great distinction.

Their geographical position, however, is very unfavorable for this emulative stimulus. They are placed among the mountains, on an isthmus connecting two large Continents, while their territory is washed by two seas. They are cut off by a large belt of savage country from us at the north, and the communication with Europe is both distant and uncertain. They have a small population, spread over an immense territory, and want, therefore, both the constant comparison of the intellect of other nations, and social compacting or aggregation among themselves. I can (from personal experience,) state how disagreeable is this want of intercourse with the rest of the world. There is intelligence from the United States, perhaps, once a month, and about as often from Europe. The information brought by these arrivals, passes chiefly into the hands of the merchants,—and, after a while, is gradually translated in fragments for some of the meagre newspapers, which treat you, months afterward, to a *refacciamento* of the stories or improvements that you had already forgotten. In this respect, our community of language with Great Britain is

of vast importance to us. England acts the part of an editor for the United States. She collects the news, the literature, the progressive inventions, and the genius of the old world, with unparalleled activity;—and we are always, at farthest, but twelve days behind her in diffusing these results among the seventeen millions of our own people. But it may be feared, that it will be long before Mexico imitates our example. Spain is not an England, in intellectual energy or advancement; and the day has not yet arrived in Mexico when a work in two volumes can be printed, bound, and distributed to her chief cities within twenty-four hours after its reception from Europe.

I am afraid the tendency of our sister Republic is too much toward the opposite extreme. She has not disenthralled herself from the Spanish bigotry which inculcated the idea that a nation must do all for herself, without a commercial marine of her own to carry on a well-regulated commerce. This seems to me to be a churlish policy, and is as likely to make boors of the people who practice it, as seclusion is calculated to make ascetics of those who refuse to mingle with the world, and improve their spirits by a free interchange of opinions and feelings. It is well to live where you feel the beatings of the great pulse of society; and it is time that man should remember he is not a mere machine, whose account with time is a balance-sheet between such productive manual powers as God has given him, and certain fearful columns of dollars and cents.

In the summary I have endeavored to present you, of the Mexican character, I must not be charged with inconsistency by those who think I am contradicting what I have previously stated, either about superstitious customs, or the vices that consign so many to the prison, and make others so reckless of life and fortune. These are evils begotten by the times and want of resources. At present, I treat neither of political nor social gamblers; neither of female frailties, nor that crafty duplicity which leads to high places in the state; neither of genteel vagrancy, nor the outcast lepéros and ignorant Indians who form so large a portion of the population of the country. All these are numerous enough and bad enough. But it has been my task—amid the desolation and ruin of the country—amid the dust and ashes to which a great nation has been reduced by civil war—to seek for some living embers, and to discover sufficient elements of a sound and healthful society, from which the regeneration of the country may be expected. With domestic virtue, genius, and patriotism, no people need despair; and it must be the prayer of every republican that enough of these still remain in Mexico to reconstruct their government and their society.

I will not venture, however, upon any conjectures in regard to these matters, until I speak of the political prospects of the country.

LETTERS

ON THE

TERRITORY, POPULATION, COMMERCE, MANUFACTURES,

ARMY, NAVY, REVENUES, CHURCH, MINES,

COINAGE, EDUCATION, POLITICAL

HISTORY, &c. &c. &c.

OF

MEXICO.

LETTER XXIX.

TERRITORY. POPULATION AND DEPARTMENTS. RATIO OF CASTES AND EDUCATION. SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. PERIODICALS.

According to the best authorities, the territory of the Mexican Republic contains an area of 1,650,000 square miles, and the United States of America, 2,300,000. If we allow, as is calculated, that the square mile will maintain, under ordinary careful cultivation, a population of 200 persons, we shall have the sum of 330,000,000 for the total ultimate capability of the Mexican soil, and 460,000,000 for the United States,—or, 130,000,000 less in Mexico than in our Union.

It may be well for us to continue this comparative statement somewhat further. In the year—

1753	our	Population was estimated at	1,051,000
1790	"	"	3,929,827
1800	"	"	5,305,925
1810	"	"	7,239,814
1820	"	"	9,638,131
1830	"	"	12,854,880
1840	"	"	17,069,453

I regret that there are not equally correct data for the statistics of population in Mexico. The census has been carelessly made at several periods, and I will endeavor to present you with what are deemed the most accurate estimates.

In 1793, according to the report made to the King of Spain by the Conde de Revellagigedo, the population of New Spain, exclusive of the Intendencies of Vera Cruz and Guadalaxara, was as follows:

Indians,	2,319,741
Europeans,	7,904
White Creoles,	677,458
Different castes,	1,478,426
	4,483,529
To which add the population of Vera Cruz and Guadalaxara, according to the estimate of 1803,	786,500
Total population in 1793,	5,270,029

The Baron Humboldt estimates it to have been in the year 1803. 5,837,100; and Mr. Poinsett, in 1824, (from the best data of the period.) 6,500,000.

In 1830, Mr. Burkhardt, an accurate German traveller, rates the several classes of Mexicans thus:

Indians,	4,500,000
Whites,	1,000,000
Negroes,	6,000
Mestizos, and other castes,	2,490,000
Total,	7,996,000

Another estimate in 1839, reduces the sum to 7,065,000, and gives *eight inhabitants to the square mile;* but the most complete, and, probably, the most accurate of the recent calculations, is the one which was made by the Government itself, (without special enumeration,) and served as a basis for the call of a Congress to form a new Constitution, under the plan of Tacubaya in 1842.

Departments.	Population
Mexico,	1,389,520
Jalisco,	679,311
Puebla,	661,902
Yucatan,	580,948
Guanajuato,	512,606
Oajaca,	500,278
Michoacan,	497,906
San Luis Potosi,	321,840
Zacatecas,	273,575
Vera Cruz,	254,380
Durango,	162,618
Chihuahua,	147,600
Sinaloa,	147,000
Chiapas,	141,206
Souora,	124,000
Queretazo,	120,560
Nuevo Léon,	101,108
Tamaulipas,	100,068
Coahuila,	75,340
Aguas Calientes,	69,698
Tabasco,	63,580
Nuevo Mexico,	57,026
Californias,	33,439
Total in 1842,	7,015,509

Since the year 1830, the population of the Republic has been dreadfully ravaged by smallpox—measles and cholera. In the Capital alone, it is estimated that about 5000 died of the first named of these diseases. 2000 of the second, and from 15,000 to 20,000, of the third. The mortality must have been in a corresponding ratio throughout the territory.

I am, however, by no means satisfied that the estimates of both Poinsett and Burkhardt are not too high; yet, assuming the statements of 1842 and of 1793 to be nearly accurate, we find in 49 years an increase of only 1,774,111 in the entire population. Again, if we assume the population to have been 6,000,000 in 1824, (the year, in fact, of the establishment of the Republic,) we find that in the course of 18 years of liberty and independence, the increase has not been greater than 1,044,140.

In the United States of America, with only 650,000 more of square miles of territory *now*, and not so large a space at the achievement of our independence, the increase of our population during the first twenty years of freedom, cannot have been less than two millions and a half, while, in the course of the last thirty years, it has averaged an increase of rather more than 33 per cent. every ten.

The several castes and classes of Mexicans may be rated in the following manner:

Indians, - - - - - - - - - - - -	4,000,000
Whites, - - - - - - - - - - - -	1,000,000
Negroes, - - - - - - - - - - - -	6,000
All other castes, such as Zambos, Mestizos, Mulattoes, &c.,	2,009,509
	7,015,509

It appears, therefore, that the Indian and Negroes amount to 4,006,000, and the whites, and all other castes, to 3,009,509. A very respectable and aged resident of Mexico, who is remarkable for the extent and accuracy of his observations, estimates that of the former (or Negroes and Indians,) but two per cent. can read and write, while of the latter, at a liberal estimate, but about 20 per cent.

If we take this computation to be correct, as I believe from my own observation it is,—and using the estimate of the decree of 1842 for the basis of the population, we shall have:

Of Indians and Negroes who can read, - - - - - -	80,120
Of Whites and all others, - - - - - - - - -	607,628
Total able to read and write out of a population of 7,000,000,	687,748

This would appear to be a startling fact in a Republic the basis of whose safety is the capacity of the people for an intellectual self-government. Let us, however, carry this calculation a little further. If we suppose that out of the 1,000,000 of *Whites*, 500,000, or the half only, are *males*, and of that half million, but 20 per cent., or but 100,000 can read and write; we will no longer be surprised that a population of more than seven millions has been hitherto controlled by a handful of men, or that, with the small means of improvement afforded to the few who can read, the

selfish natures of the superior classes, who wield the physical and intellectual forces of the nation, have forced the masses to become little more than the slaves of those whose wit gives them the talent of control.

In addition to this, you will observe how little has been done hitherto for the cause of learning by the Government, when you examine a table of the expenses of the nation, by which it will be seen, that in the year 1840, while $180,000 were spent for hospitals, fortresses, and prisons, and $8,000,000 for the army, (without a foreign war) only $110,000 were given to all the institutions of learning in Mexico.*

I learn, however, with pleasure, that under the new scheme of national regeneration which has recently been put in action, the subject of Education has engaged the especial attention of the existing powers, and that they design to foster it by every means in their power.

In every one of the parishes into which the city is divided, there is established a school for boys, and another for girls, supported by the *Ayuntamiento*, or Town Council. In these establishments the pupils are taught, without charge, to read, write, and calculate, and are besides instructed in religious and *political* catechisms. In the schools for girls, in addition to these branches, they learn sewing and other occupations suitable for their sex. Books and stationery are furnished *gratis*.

There is another establishment called the *Normal School*, supported by the Government, and devoted to the instruction of the soldiers of the army in the rudiments of learning. Advancement and improvement in this school are suitably rewarded by ranks in the army. Besides this, there is, also, a LANCASTERIAN COMPANY, which, commencing its labors in the Capital, is spreading its branches all over the country. It is devoted to primary instruction, and is protected by all the citizens of the Republic who are remarkable either for their wealth, education, or social position. The contribution is a dollar monthly. I am glad to learn that, since I left Mexico, the usefulness of this Company has been so apparent to the people, that schools upon its plan have not only been established in the principal cities and towns, but that they are now being founded in almost every village of importance, and even upon extensive *haciendas* or plantations, where the laboring population is numerous and ignorant.

In the city of Mexico, this Company has formed a large number of schools for children of both sexes, upon the same footing as those established by the Ayuntamiento; that is to say, the pupils are taught without

* The United States Census for 1840, gives the following results—

Number of Universities and Colleges,	173
" of Students in do.	16,232
Academies and Grammar Schools,	3,242
Students in do.	164,159
Primary Common Schools,	47,239
Scholars in do.	1,865,204
Scholars at public charge,	662,324
Total number of *whites* in the United States,	14,189,169
Total number of *whites* in the United States over the age of 20 who cannot read and write,	549,622

charge, and are furnished with the requisite stationery and books. There is a *Night School* for adults, very fully attended by citizens, whose occupation prevents them from devoting themselves to study during the day. In the women's and men's Prisons, and in the House of Correction for juvenile delinquents, I also learn that schools have been formed; and it is by no means a cheerless feature in this picture of dawning improvement, that the ladies of Mexico, most distinguished by talent, wealth, and cultivation, have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to devote a portion of their time for the purpose of instructing their unfortunate sisters in the prisons.

Besides these establishments, (which you will observe, are all of a free and public character,) it is difficult to give any idea of the number of private schools for both sexes in the Capital and Departments. Many of them are conducted by foreigners as well as Mexicans, and although they generally instruct in French, English, grammar, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, the rudiments of history, book-keeping, drawing, and music, I have reason to believe that none of them are remarkable for the regularity or perfection of their system.

In the city of Mexico, there are the collegiate establishments of El Seminario Conciliar, San Ildefonso, San Gregorio, and San Juan Lateran. The first of these is under the immediate supervision of the Archbishop, and supported by a portion of the ecclesiastical revenues. The other three are under the care of the Government. In almost all the Departments of the Republic, there are collegiate Institutes, and in some, even two or three.

The course of instruction in these establishments is alleged to be thorough and modern. The students *who live within the walls*, are expected to contribute for their education, while others, who only attend the lectures of the Professors, are exempt from all costs and charges, so that about two-thirds of the pupils of every College receive their literary education gratuitously.

If peace be now permitted to reëstablish her beneficial sway over the country, and men's minds are allowed, in the general calm, to direct themselves to their own and their children's culture, these institutions cannot fail to afford the most rational hope to the well-wisher of Mexican prosperity and happiness. The regeneration of Mexico lies in her schools. Without their success she must not expect to drive *léperos* from the streets, or usurping Dictators from the Palace of her ancient Kings.

As an interesting Table connected with the diffusion of information, I insert, in conclusion, the following statement of the number of newspapers and periodicals published in the Republic:

In Chihuahua,	1
Coahuila,	1
Chiapas,	1
Colima,	1
Durango,	2
Guauajuato,	2
Guadalaxara,	2
Aguascalientes,	1
Lagos,	1
Mexico,	6
Morelia,	2
Monterey de N. Leon,	2
Matàmoras,	2
Oaxaca,	2
Puebla,	2
Queretaro,	1
Tobasco,	1
Sonora,	1
Snialoa,	1
Tampico,	2
Ciudad Victoria,	1
Jalapa,	1
Vera Cruz,	2
Yucatan,	2
Zacatecas,	2
San Luis Potosi,	2
Total,	44

NOTE.—I subjoin, for the sake of comparison, the following statistics of the printing in the United States, according to the Census of 1840:

Number of Printing Offices,	1,552
" Binderies,	447
" Daily Papers,	138
" Weekly "	1,141
" Semi and Tri-Weekly,	125
" Periodicals,	227
" Men employed,	11,523
Amount of capital employed,	$5,573,515

LETTER XXX.

COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES OF MEXICO.

THE COMMERCE of Mexico has been sensibly diminishing for the last ten years. This is attributable to the continual revolutionary disturbances of the country, the decrease of the wealth of the people, and the pecuniary embarrassments to which most of the inhabitants have been subjected, by the non-payment of Government loans and unfortunate investments.

In 1832 and 1833, the products of the Custom House amounted to about twelve millions per annum. In 1839, on account of the French blockade, they fell to near three millions; in 1840, they rose again to seven millions; and, in the following year, fell to little more than *five*, which sum may be divided among the different ports as follows, to wit:

Vera Cruz,	$3,329,802
Tampico,	883,039
Matamoras,	312,403
Marattan,	383,159
Guyamas,	55,814
Monterrey,	96,853
Acapulco,	17,182
San Blas,	208,845
	$5,287,097

This corresponds to about twelve millions three hundred thousand dollars of importation annually, divided (according to an estimate,) in the following manner:

From England,	$4,500,000
" France,	3,000,000
" Hamburgh,	1,500,000
" China,	1,000,000
" United States,	800,000
" Spain,	500,000
" Genoa, and other ports,	1,000,000
	$12,300,000

The expense to the Government, for the collection of this revenue, was $348,290.

The EXPORTS from the Republic, (chiefly of course of its own productions,) may be rated at:

Precious Metals.	Specie, through Vera Cruz,	$4,000,000
	" " Mazatlan and San Blas,	2,500,000
	Silver and Gold, through other ports,	5,000,000
	Silver, through Tampico,	7,000,000
	Cochineal, Jalap, Vanilla, Sarsaparilla and Hides,	1,000,000
	Sundries,	500,000
		$20,000,000

From this estimate, you perceive, that about $18,500,000, *in the precious metals*, are exported annually from Mexico. The mines produce near twenty-two millions of silver, of which, it is calculated, that twelve millions are coined in the seven mints of the Republic, *per annum*.

From the above calculations, it will be observed, that there is a difference of about $8,000,000 between the *imports and exports*, a large portion of which is estimated to be covered by *smuggling*.

The following comparative estimate of the Exports and Imports of the United States and of Mexico, for the years 1841 and 1842, cannot fail to be interesting in this connection, especially when you take into consideration the comparative extent of territory and population:

Exports from Mexico, in 1842,		$20,000,000
Of which, in gold and silver,		18,500,000
Balance in other products of industry,		$1,500,000
Excess of Imports over the industrial Exports, exclusive of the precious metals,		$10,500,000
Imports of the United States in 1841–2,		$99,357,329
Exports from " " "		104,117,969
	Difference,	$4,760,640
Exports of Gold and Silver, "		$9,805,235
Of which was the produce of U. S. Mines,	$2,746,486	
" " foreign Gold,	677,297	
" " foreign Silver,	6,381,452	
Total,	$9,805,235	
Whole exports from the United States,		$104,117,969
Deduct exports of the Precious Metals,		9,805,235
		$94,312,734

Or, in other words, the United States exported $94,312,734 worth, representing her industry, (exclusive of gold and silver,) while Mexico, with a territory nearly as large, exported but $1,500,000. In addition to this, it must be recollected, that but $2,746,846 of the precious metals were the product of our own country, while at least $15,000,000 were the product of the Mexican mines; leaving an excess of nearly three millions above the total annual coinage of the nation.

Whole Exports, for say	8,000,000	people,	$20,000,000
" " "	17,000,000	"	104,117,96[illegible]

This will give us the ratio of about $6 12½ for each person in the United States, and $2 50 for each person in Mexico.

In order to afford some idea of Mexican commerce more in detail, (so far as the Eastern Coast is concerned,) I have constructed the following Table, the accuracy of which may be confidently relied on. In regard to the Western Coast, it is impossible to state anything with certainty. The chief contraband trade of the Republic has been carried on there with the most unblushing audacity, until very recently; and, of course, statistical returns will tend rather to deceive than enlighten.

COMMERCE OF THE PORT OF VERA CRUZ.

	ONE YEAR. From 1st January to 31st December, 1841.		SIX MONTHS. From 1st January, 1842, to 1st July.	
	Entries.	Departures.	Entries.	Departures.
American,	39	37	19	19
English,	45	42	26	21
French,	31	33	13	17
Spanish,	36	35	12	15
Hamburgh,	5	5	3	4
Danish,	5	4	1	1
Belgian,	3	3	1	0
Bremen,	4	4	1	1
Prussian,	2	2	2	0
Sardinian,	4	5	2	2
Colombian,	5	5	2	3
Mexican,	37	43	20	26
	216	218	102	109

Passengers in 1841,	1,109
Immigrants,	459
Increase of population,	614

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN TRADE WITH TAMPICO, FROM 1st JANUARY TO 31st DECEMBER, 1841.

	ARRIVALS.				DEPARTURES.				
NATION.	No. of vessels.	Tons.	No. of crew.	Value of invoice in £'s sterling.	No. of vessels.	Tons.	No. of crew.	Value of invoice in £'s sterling.	REMARKS.
United States	24	2,572	168	£49,025½	24	2,437	155	£119,840½	1 in port.
British Men-of-war and Packets	19			66,735	19			1,120,397	
British Merchantmen	9	1,041	70	215,900	8	951	62	4,800	1 in port.
Mexican	18	864	120	14,800	18	885	123	3,960	1 in port.
Hanseatic	4	592	42	83,000	3	462	32	35,000	1 in port.
French	6	690	65	64,300	10	1,290	110	40,000	
Spanish	9	1,004	89	26,000	7	786	70	2,000	2 in port.
Sardinian	1	110	9	6,000	1	110	9	600	Lost on the bar going out.
Danish	1	62	5	1,200	1	62	5		
	91	6,935	568	£526,960½	91	6,983	567	£1,326,597½	

N. B.—The pound sterling is valued at five dollars United States currency.

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN TRADE WITH TAMPICO, FROM 1st JANUARY, TO 31st JUNE, 1842.

	ARRIVALS.				DEPARTURES.				
NATION.	No. of Vessels.	Tons.	No. of Crew.	Invoice Value of Cargo.	No. of Vessels.	Tons.	No. of Crew.	Invoice Value of Cargo.	REMARKS.
American, - - - - -	15	1277	91	$43,320	13	1092	83	$171,980	2 Vessels sold.
British Men-of-war and Packets,	14			269,953	14			2,845,240	ALL SPECIE.
British Merchantmen, - -	8	1270	62	310,000	5	687	39	7,125	4 in port.
Mexicans, - - - -	20	976	142	58,000	17	983	119	8,250	2 "
Hanseatic, - - - - -	2	260	19	105,000	2	260	19	5,000	1 "
French, - - - - -	4	497	35	200,000	5	541	44	175,000	1 "
Spanish, - - - - -	2	194	22	45,000	4	402	37	4,000	
Sardinian, - - - -	1	136	7	25,000	1	136	7	3,000	
Colombian, - - - - -	1	57	10	6,000	1	57	10	4,000	
	67	4667	338	$1,062,245	62	4158	358	$3,223,505	

N. B.—The importation in British Vessels and Royal Mail Steamers, is entirely quicksilver.

TRADE WITH MATAMORAS 1841.

The whole trade of 1841 was carried on in vessels from the United States:

Vessels 32 - - - - - - Tonnage 2,345

EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES.

Specie - - - - - - - - -	$352,766 17/100
Hides - - - - - - - - - -	117,334
Wool - - - - - - - - -	15,943
Horses and mules - - - - - -	800
	486,834 17/100

IMPORTS FROM THE UNITED STATES.

Countries where manufactured.	Silks.	Woollens.	Cottons.	Linens.	Ironware and Machinery.	Paper.	Jewelry.	Sundries.	Total.
Germany			$2,051	$40,947				$246	$43,244
England	$1,040	$25,046	146,280	23,768	$3,921			3,140	203,195
Spain								8,060	8,060
U. States			25,640		15,120			66,140	106,900
France	2,340	4,148	31,480		270	$1,680	$452	5,334	52,301
Havana				6,597				13,245	13,245
Tot. Values.	$3,380	29,194	205,451	71,312	19,311	1,680	452	96,165	426,945

It may be well for us to take heed of the gradual decline of *our* commerce with Mexico, which has diminished to almost utter insignificance. I am not merchant enough to divine what are the commercial causes of this state of things; but I can readily imagine, that, in connection with the general difficulties of the country, our trade has been seriously affected by the part which our citizens have taken, or are alleged to have taken, in the insurrectionary movements of Texas. The rebellion in that province, the union of a portion of North Americans with its armies, and the sympathy of many others, expressed in a manner which I believe to be both unwise and illegal, have caused our people to be unpopular throughout the Republic, and have made the authorities averse to exhibiting that strict justice in our personal and commercial rights which should characterize the intercourse of friendly nations. Our citizens have been imprisoned in Mexico on frivolous pretences. Forced loans have been wrested from our merchants. Tribunals have been deaf to demands for restitution, and a mutual distrust has arisen, which has proved fatal in many instances to trade and intercourse. The effects of this will, however, be most strikingly exhibited in the following table, compiled chiefly from the reports of the Secretary of our National Treasury.

COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO.

For the year ending 30th September, 1823, the imports and exports to Mexico and South America generally, were as follows:

Imports - - - - - -	$4,842,503
Exports - - - - - - -	3,229,343
	$1,613,160 balance in our favor.
Of these imports - - - - -	$1,950,416 were in specie and bullion.

TRADE WITH MEXICO FOR TWELVE YEARS.

	Imports from Mexico.	Exports to Mexico.
Year ending 30th Sept. 1829	$5,026,761	$2,331,151
" " 1830	5,235,241	4,837,458
" " 1832	4,293,954	3,467,541
" " 1833	5,452,818	5,408,091
" " 1834	8,066,068	5,265,053
" " 1835	9,490,446	9,029,291
" " 1836	5,615,819	6,041,635
" " 1837	5,654,002	3,880,323
" " 1838	3,127,153	2,787,362
" " 1839	3,500,707	2,164,097
" " 1840	4,175,001	2,515,341
" " 1841	3,284,957	2,036,620

GOLD AND SILVER IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES FROM MEXICO.

	Bullion.	Specie.
S. America and Mexico in 1823	$121,970	$1,828,446
From Mexico 1836	68,546	4,468,872
" " 1837	165,429	4,405,549
" " 1838	230,183	2,459,243
" " 1840	100,976	3,357,936
" " 1841	51,184	1,886,918

By this you will observe, that, from having a trade worth upward of $9,000,000 in 1835, we have been reduced to a comparatively insignificant commerce of $1,000,000, at the extreme, in 1843! If peace be restored in Mexico and mutual confidence reëstablished, I can see no cause why our interests may not become replaced on their ancient basis, and a natural alliance firmly established between two sister Republics, who, in addition to a community of political tendencies, are the closest neighbors.

England has striven for a two-fold object in Mexico. She has always looked to her debt from that country as the great means of affecting her commerce and manufactures, and ultimately, perhaps, of affording her a claim for its satisfaction in territory.* If our Government was always careful to have herself properly represented in that Republic by vigilant persons, whose eyes were constantly open to the encroachments of foreign Powers, and especially to the grasping tendencies of England; and if, at the same time, it took occasion upon every fitting opportunity, to sustain the rights of our citizens by enforcing the reasonable and friendly appeals of its Representative; I doubt not that, in a few years, Mexico would awake from the spell of her foreign delusions, and remember the hand that was first stretched forth to welcome her into the family of independent nations. She would have every reason to do so. The political feelings of the mass of her intelligent men are decidedly republican. Her own independence would be assured to her. The constant alliance

* Vide appendix, No. 1.

of the United States would protect her in the event of a hostile foot being set upon her shores. She would secure the integrity of this Continent, and free her people from the dangers that menace them from abroad, whenever a minister is obliged to dun her for her debts, or threaten her with the "last argument" known to diplomats and nations.*

A favorite mode of raising loans in Mexico, for the benefit of the Government, has been that of granting permits to merchants (chiefly Englishmen,) to introduce *cotton twist* into the Republic. This is a prohibited article;—prohibited for the purpose of cherishing the manufacturing establishments of the country. That these have progressed to a very considerable extent, *and have entirely outstripped the production of the cotton planters of Mexico*, will be seen by the annexed Table, which I have obtained from the most authentic sources.

STATISTICS OF MEXICAN MANUFACTURES.

No. of Factories in each Department.		Spindles established.	Spindles In erection.	Total.
In Mexico, - -	12	30,156	—	30,156
" Puebla, - -	21	35,672	12,240	47,912
" Vera Cruz, - -	7	17,860	5,200	23,060
" Guadalaxara, -	5	11,312	6,500	17,812
" Queretaro, - -	2	7,620	—	7,620
" Durango, - -	4	2,520	—	2,520
" Guanajuato, -	1	1,200	—	1,200
" Sonora. - -	1	1,000	—	1,000
	53	107,340	23,940	131,280

* I did not design alluding, in this work, to the Texans or to the Santa Fé expedition; but I cannot let this occasion pass without bearing testimony to the kind hearts and generous disposition of the Mexicans, in regard to the prisoners of that ill-starred adventure. It is true, that several persons connected with it were *travellers and merchants only*, utterly ignorant of the purposes of the rest; but I believe there is now no doubt that the great body of the troops entertained the idea of revolutionizing the department of New Mexico. Yet these men were neither court-marshalled nor executed. They were forced to undergo a long and fatiguing march to the Capital, and some of them were, in Mexico, Puebla and Perote, chained and treated with indignity by the officers of the Government. But I have heard them *all* speak in terms of the most heartfelt gratitude *of the continued sympathy expressed for them by the citizens*. The Mexicans visited them; sent them food and raiment; interceded for them, and used every effort to mitigate their sufferings. The officers were allowed many privileges by their keepers, and, finally, the whole of them were *released*, after having sworn not to take up arms against Mexico. Notwithstanding this oath, several of them had scarcely landed in Texas before they were again in hostile array against the Government that freed them, and although some were once more seized upon the Mexican territory, I learn that their lives have been spared, and that they will probably be again released.

I must be permitted, in this note, to mention the brave Colonel Cooke, (a native of Virginia, who commanded a division of the expedition,) as one of those rare heroes, whose chivalry reminds us of the days of romance. At the battle of San Jacinto, it is said, that he saved the life of Santa Anna by interposing himself between the infuriated troops and the captured General, when he was brought into Houston's camp. I have been told that Santa Anna remembered *his name*, as soon as he learned that a person called Cooke was in the Santa Fé expedition, and resolved to release him if he proved to be his preserver. On Cooke's arrival at Mexico, the President sent for and questioned him closely as to the facts, but Cooke steadily denied his identity. When reproved by his friends, he exclaimed, that he would avail himself of no such advantage gained merely by honorable war, and that he had resolved to share the fate of his companions, be it what it might. Together they had been captured, together they would undergo the sufferings of imprisonment, and together they would be released, or die. He kept his promise till the last, and on the 13th of June, 1842, marched at the head of his little band to the review at which Santa Anna, in person, released them.

It must be remarked, that there are *three* manufacturing establishments in the Department of Durango, the number of spindles in which, are not included in the preceding Table, because the *Junta de Industria* had not received very definite information respecting them. They may, however, be calculated at about 4000, which, added to the 131,280, will give a grand total of 135,000, *at least*. The number of *looms*, also, in the Republic is not presented, because *data* have been furnished only in relation to those moved by machinery. An immense number of *hand-looms* are in constant occupation throughout the Republic.

	Lbs.	Dollars.
I.		
The COTTON FACTORIES of the Republic consume, *daily*, with the 107,340 spindles, in actual operation,	39,755	
Which produce in spun thread, at the rate of ½ of a lb. for each spindle,	35,780	
Which, converted into *mantas* and *rebosos*, have a value of		39,358
II.		
The same factories, after the 23,940 spindles in erection are in operation, will consume *daily*,	48,622	
Each spindle will produce of thread,	43,760	
Which converted as aforesaid, will amount in value to		48,037
III.		
The consumption of cotton, in the year, of 300 working days, with 131,280 spindles, will be	14,586,666	
The produce in thread,	13,138,000	
The produce in manufactured value, as above,		14,440,800
IV.		
The 131,280 spindles, working day and night, will consume,	24,797,332	
Produce in thread,	22,317,600	
Produce in manufactured value, as above,		24,549,360
V.		
The 131,280 spindles will occupy (working only by day,)	8,753 looms.	
" " " (working day and night,)	14,880 "	
No. of OPERATIVES employed by day,	17,000	
" " " day and night,	29,000	
VI.		
It will require for the 131,280 spindles working *by day*,	145,666⅔ quin. cotton.	
The produce of the country, at the utmost, is not more than	50,000	
Leaving a deficit of	95,666⅔	
*But if the spindles work *day and night*, they will require,	247,973⅓	
Produce of the country, as above,	50,000	
Leaving a deficit of	197,973⅓ quintals.	

* At the town of Lowell, alone, they make nearly a *million and a quarter* yards of cotton cloth per week, employ about 9000 operatives (6375 females) and use 428,000 lbs. of raw cotton per week. The annual amount of raw cotton used is 22,568,000 lbs.; enough to load 50 ships of 350 tuns each; and of cotton manufactured 70,275,910 yards—100 lbs. of cotton will produce 89 yards of cloth.

The value of the Mexican manufacturing establishments may be stated, in round numbers, at $10,000,000.

Hitherto the cotton crop of the Republic has not greatly exceeded 50,000 quintals; which, calculated at a mean of $35 the quintal, will give a total valuation of the produce at $1,750,000. The estimate I have presented in the foregoing tables shows, however, that the spindles, *working day and night*, will require 247,937½ quintals, or, in other words, that there is a deficit of 197,973½, which, valued at the same rate, will amount to $6,929,072.

It is true, that many persons have been induced by this condition of the market, and the prohibition of importing the raw material, to commence plantations of cotton; but I greatly doubt whether the habits of the agricultural population will permit their prosperity. They dislike to adventure in new branches of industry. If their ancestors wrought on cotton plantations, they are content to continue in the same employment; but it will be difficult to train the new laborer to the newer cultivation. They adhere too closely to traditional occupations, and I have heard of some most signal failures, which have forced persons to abandon their establishments, after a considerable outlay of money in land and implements.

Under these circumstances, we may well ask our countrymen whether Mexico might not be looked to as a market for a portion of our crops, and if the Government should not be required to turn its attention to this vast interest, for the purpose of attempting to obtain a removal of the inhibitions on that valuable article of commerce. If England were a cotton growing country, or had an adjacent colony producing it, I am confident that the opportunity would be promptly and advantageously improved. Under any circumstances it is worth the trial; and, especially, at this moment, when Great Britain is interfering in the quarrel between Mexico and Texas, and seeking either to produce a peace or to form an alliance with the revolted province, which will either extinguish slavery and cotton planting, or make Mexico the buyer of her offspring's productions, to the detriment of our Union.

The cotton crop of Mexico has been very variable in value. At Tepic, on the west coast, it has been as low as $15 the quintal; at Vera Cruz, on the east coast, $22 and $34; while at Puebla and in the Capital, it has risen to $40, and even $48.

In spite of all the efforts of English capitalists and diplomacy, the Government has steadily persevered in fostering the manufactures of the Republic, except by the occasional allowances of the importation of *twist*. The administration of Santa Anna, however, has been energetic I am informed, both in its opposition to the introduction of this article, and in its effects to suppress the smuggling of English and American fabrics. The manufacturers, therefore, regard their establishments as perfectly safe, and their future success as certain.

The average price of *mantas*, (cotton cloth) of one *vara* width, in 1842, was about twenty-five cents the *vara;* and of *twist*, No. 12 to 22, about seventy-five cents the pound. It was estimated, that if cotton fell in consequence of importations being allowed, or a larger crop, to $25 the quintal, these articles would be reduced to 18¾ cents the *vara* for the first, and to 50 cents the pound for the second. This condition of the market would prevent all importations from abroad, even aided by smuggling.

An intelligent merchant of the city of Mexico, who has resided long in the country, and has an extensive acquaintance in the Republic, informs me, that there are about five thousand hand-looms throughout the Departments, which will work up all the spun yarn into *mantas* and *rebosos* as fast as it can be made. Many of these looms are entirely employed in the manufacture of the common rebosos—described in some of my preceding letters—the consumption of which is so great among the poorer classes. The value of these looms is estimated at between six and seven hundred thousand dollars. The number of persons employed, in every way, in manufactures, cannot be much short of thirty thousand.

The power made use of for the movement of the factories is water; which is abundant, for that purpose, all over the country, proceeding from small streams falling from the mountains into the neighboring plains or barrancas. Owing to the scarcity of wood, and the costliness of its transportation, steam cannot be advantageously applied.

There are several manufactories of cotton balls, or thread, in Mexico, but they are not of very great importance.

Paper factories are working with considerable success. There are two near the Capital, one at Puebla, and one in Guadalaxara. Their productions are very good, but by no means adequate to the consumption of the country. The quantity of this article used for *cigarritos*, or paper cigars, is inconceivable. The best coarse wrapping or envelope paper, I have ever seen, is made in Mexico from the leaves of the Agave Americana, the plant which yields "pulqué." It has almost the toughness and tenacity of iron.

Both at Puebla and Mexico there are several glass factories, making large quantities of the material for windows, and common tumblers. Their produce is, nevertheless, insufficient for the wants of the country.

Woollen blankets, and some very coarse woollen cloths or *baizes*, are also manufactured in the Republic. The blankets, or serapes, I have heretofore described when speaking of the equipment of a Mexican horseman. They are often of beautiful texture, and woven, with the gayest colors and patterns, into a garment that frequently costs a fashionable cavalier from two to five hundred dollars. As this is as indispensable an article for the comfort of a lépero as of a gentleman, and as necessary for a man as a reboso is for a woman, you may readily imagine how great is the consumption.

Such is a sketch of this branch of industry, to which the Government and people seem to have devoted themselves with a hearty will. I have dwelt at considerable length upon it, as evincing an energy and temper not usually attributed to Mexicans, and for the purpose of exhibiting a phase of character at once creditable to their resolution, and manifesting a degree of independence and thriftiness worthy of imitation.

LETTER XXXI.

THE REVENUE AND RESOURCES OF MEXICO. ARMY. NAVY. PRODUCE OF MINES. TOTAL COINAGE. THE CHURCH, ITS WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.

THE income of the Mexican Government is derived from revenues on foreign commerce, imposts on internal trade, imposts on pulqué, export duty on the precious metals, lotteries, post-office, stamped paper, taxes, tobacco, powder, salt-works, and several other sources of trifling importance.

In 1840, these revenues are stated in the Report of the Minister of the Treasury as follows:

	Nett proceeds after deducting expense of collection.
Imposts on Foreign Commerce,	$7,115,849
" Interior "	4,306,585
" On property, income, &c.	466,061
Exchanges, &c.	307,427
Creditos Activós,	3,309
Balances of accounts,	355
Enteros de productos liquidos,	452,146
Extraordinary subsidy,	103
Arbitrio estraordinario,	78,177
Capitacion,	483
Donations,	13,662
	$12,744,157

In 1839, the revenues amounted to $11,215,848. The income from the post-office department, (which is not included in the statement for 1840,) was $178,738, in 1839. In 1840, the lotteries produced the gross sum of $215,437—but as the expenses connected with their management, amounted to $158,485, it left a balance of but $56,952, for the Government. The "*sealed paper*," or stamp tax, produced $110,863, but as this impost has been nearly doubled during 1842, the revenue must at present be proportionally greater.

I have been unable to obtain any of the official documents of 1841 and 1842, (in consequence of the disturbed condition of the country,) with the exception of the Custom House returns, for the former year.

	Custom-Houses.	Tonnage Duty.	Nett proceeds after deducting costs of collection.
East Coast.	Vera Cruz,	$31,032	$3,374,528
	Tampico,	7,363	1,019,046
	Matamoras,	3,525	279,627
West Coast.	Mazatlan,	6,245	397,213
	Guyamas,	2,092	46,189
	Monterey,	810	85,982
	Acapulco,	573	7,193
	San Blas,	2,719	190,270
		$55,259	$5,399,948

It will be perceived that the Custom Houses of Tabasco, Campechê, Sisal, Isla de Carmen, and Bacalar, are not included in the preceding statement, in consequence of the separation of the first (during the period,) from her allegiance to the Republic, and on account of the rebellious condition of the rest. At the date of the statement, reports from Goatzacoalco, Alvarado, Tuxpan, Huatulco, Manzanillo, La Paz, Pueblo Viejo, Altata, Loreto, San Diego, San Francisco, Soto la Marina, and from the frontier posts of Paso del Norte, Comitan, Tonalá, Santa Fé de N. Mexico, y Presidio del Norte, had not been yet received at the Treasury Office in the Capital. The costs of the collection of this revenue amounted to $52,886, and the salaries of officers to $295,404.

I regret that I was unable to obtain any very accurate date of the Santa Fé Trade, which, under judicious management, might no doubt be very advantageously conducted for the interest of both countries. In the present distracted state, however, of Texas and the Northern Provinces of Mexico, little is to be hoped, until better feelings and better regulations are firmly established. Santa Fé, and Chihuahua divide the trade; the latter, since the year 1831. The subjoined rough estimate has been given me of the value of our trade at both places since that period:

Years.	Total at cost.	Taken to Chihuahua.	Men.	Wagons.
1831	$250,000	$40,000	320	130
1832	150,000	45,000	150	80
1833	145,000	50,000	140	75
1834	160,000	60,000	160	80
1835	135,000	55,000	140	70
1836	122,000	55,000	120	60
1837	150,000	75,000	150	80
1838	90,000	50,000	100	50
1839	260,000	150,000	250	125
1840	50,000	10,000	60	30
1841	100,000	50,000	150	80
1842	200,000	60,000	200	120

No one who has resided any length of time in Mexico, either connected or unconnected with commerce, can fail to have heard of the extent to which smuggling has been and still is carried on in the Republic. This infamous system, alike destructive of private morals and public integrity, has become a regular business in portions of the country, and, after having been, to a great extent, suppressed on the Eastern coast, has for several years occupied the attention of numbers on the West. Mr. McClure* calculated that the Republic possesses "a frontier of five thousand miles, including the sinuosities, windings, and turnings of bays, gulfs and rivers on the Pacific; three thousand miles on the United States of America and Texas; and above two thousand five hundred on the Gulf of Mexico; making, in all, ten thousand five hundred miles of frontier to guard against illicit trade, *without an individual on the one thousand two hundredth part of the space to give notice of any depredations that may happen.*"

Now, although the estimate of this philanthropist may appear rather fanciful, when we remember, that wherever there are smugglers to *introduce* it is probable that there are individuals to *receive*, and consequently that the Government *might* be protected; still it is undeniable that the territory is vast, the population sparse, and the corruption of government agents has been as shameful as it was notorious. Facts came to my knowledge, while a resident in Mexico, which proved, beyond question, this immoral tampering, and went far to implicate men of rank and capacity in the country. I forbear to detail these occurrences here, but I have the documents, in writing, under the attestation of an individual who was approached by one of the vile instruments in the deed of shame, and I feel perfectly satisfied of their unexaggerated accuracy. I do not mention this circumstance, for the purpose of reflecting on the existing Government; but simply to direct the attention of such Mexicans as may read these letters, to a frightful evil, the extirpation of which will at once increase the financial resources of the country and improve the morals of their people. It may be urged, perhaps, that it is impossible to correct this mal-administration; and, I confess, there appears to be much force in the remarks which I subjoin, from the author I have just quoted. At page 292, of his "Opinions," Mr. McClure observes:

"In the comparatively limited frontiers, and crowded population of the European monarchies, with their hundreds of thousands of soldiers and officers of the customs, it has been found impossible to prevent smuggling, with all its attendant crimes and corruptions. What hopes, then, can a small population scattered over so extensive a surface, have, that a revenue will be collected, even if it were probable in the present state of morals to find honest collectors! It would be contrary to all former experience and analogy, to expect anything else, in this country, than a gradual diminution of the revenue, in the ratio of the organization of smuggling. All additional guards or officers of the customs, would certainly

* Vide McClure's "Opinions."

increase the quantity of bribery and corruption, but would not add to the revenue a sum equal to their pay!"

NATIONAL DEBT.

The national debt of Mexico is one of very considerable importance, and may be divided into the two great classes of Foreign and Internal debt.

The INTERNAL DEBT amounts to $18,550,000; and in 1841 the customs were mortgaged to pay this sum, in the following subdivisions:

17	per cent.	of the	Customs	devoted to a debt of	$2,040,000
15	"	"	"	"	410,000
12	"	"	"	"	2,100,000
10	"	"	"	"	3,100,000
8	"	"	"	"	1,200,000
10	"	"	"	Tobacco fund debt,	9,700,000
16⅔	"	"	"	Interest on English debt.	
10	"	"	"	Garrison fund.	
98⅔					$18,550,000
1⅓	balance clear of lien, for the Government!				
100					

The FOREIGN DEBT is still larger than this; and (including the above,) I will state the entire national responsibility, as it existed at the end of last year:

Internal debt,	$18,550,000
Debt to English creditors,	60,00 ,000
United States claims and interest, say	2,400,000
Copper to be redeemed,	2,000,000
Claims for Hilazo,	700,000
Bustamante loan,	50 ,000
	$84,150,000

Until 1841, the whole of the revenue, except 11⅓ per cent. was appropriated to the payment of $18,550,000, while the remaining claims were entirely unprotected by securities. Shortly after the accession of Santa Anna to power, he *suspended* (by a decree of the 16th of February) the payment of the first five funds charged upon the customs, as stated in a preceding table, but reserved the *active appropriation* for the Tobacco and *English interest debts*. This, as may be well imagined, created great dissatisfaction among the mercantile classes, and among numbers of persons who had invested their capital in Government loans, with a reliance upon the *revenues* as a solemn pledge for their redemption. Santa Anna, however, withstood the torrent manfully. He was assailed by legations, newspapers, and individuals, but nothing could induce him to yield the

pressing wants of the Government to their importunities. He was, in fact, forced to the measure. The national credit was irremediably impaired, and he found it impossible to obtain loans. The consequence was, the seizure of the customs by the *suspension* of their prior appropriation until he was enabled to relieve his Treasury.

Independently of the English and the American debt, the claims upon the Mexican Government have usually been created by means of loans of the most usurious character. In order to illustrate this system, and to show the enormous rates at which lenders endeavored to assure themselves against loss by depreciation, I will recount some transactions which were partly effected in 1841.

On the 20th of September, fifteen days before the treaty of Estansuela, the administration of President Bustamante offered the following terms for a loan of $1,200,000. It proposed to receive the sum of $200,000 in *cash*, and $1,000,000 represented in the *paper or credits* of the Government. These credits or paper were worth, in the market, nine per cent. About one-half of the loan was taken, and the parties obtained orders on the several maritime Custom Houses, receivable in payment of duties.

The revenues of the Custom House of Matamoras, have been always hitherto appropriated to pay the army, on the northern frontier of the Republic. During the administration of General Bustamante, the commandant of Matamoras issued bonds or drafts against that Custom House for $150,000, receivable for all kinds of duties as cash. He disposed of these bonds to the merchants of that port for $100,000—and, in addition to the *bonus* of $50,000, allowed them interest on the $100,000, at the rate of three per cent. per month, until they had duties to pay which they could extinguish by the drafts.

Another transaction, of a singular nature, developes the character of the Government's negotiations, and can only be accounted for by the receipt of some advantages which the act itself does not disclose to the public.

The mint at Guanajuato, or the right to coin at that place, was contracted for, in 1842, by a most respectable foreign house in Mexico, for $71,000 *cash*, for the term of *fourteen years*, at the same time that another offer was before the Government, stipulating for the payment of $400,000 for the same period, payable in annual instalments of $25,000 each. The $71,000 in hand, were, however, deemed of more value than the prospective four hundred thousand! This mint leaves a nett annual income of $60,000!

With such a spendthrift abandonment of the resources of the country, continued, for a series of years, in the midst of the pressure of foreign claims and domestic warfare, it is, indeed, wonderful that Mexico has so long survived the ruin which must inevitably overtake her with a debt of $84,000,000, and an annual expenditure (as will be seen from the suc-

ceeding statement,) of $13,000,000, independent of payment of interest, balances, and loans. Yet with all these incumbrances, created under the most usurious exactions, it is greatly to her honor that she has not *repudiated* the claims of her creditors;—a moral and political firmness in which she may well be emulated by some of those very States that have been loudest in their thoughtless abuse of a sister Republic.

A late Mexican paper states, that the Minister of the Treasury of Mexico has published a decree, by which the President directs twenty-five per cent. of all the receipts of the Custom Houses of the Republic to be set apart as a "*sinking fund*," to pay the public debt. This fund is to be inviolable. The decree provides for the *consolidation and funding* of the debt at the rate of a six per cent. stock, for which it will be exchanged by such as choose. Those who do not embrace this arrangement with the Government are to have their claims liquidated, only, *when out of the sinking fund now created, those who accede to the exchange of stock, shall have been first of all paid!*

If we exclude the American debt, now in the course of payment, (an exclusion nevertheless improper, as the Government has but changed her responsibility from a foreign creditor to a domestic one,) the debt of Mexico may still be fairly estimated at $82,000,000, which, at six per cent., bears an annual interest of $4,920,000. The actual income from customs *and all resources* may be set down at $13,000,000—25 per cent. on which will produce a fund of $3,250,000, or $1,670,000 *less than the interest on the whole debt!* It may well be asked whence is to proceed the "*sinking fund*," so long as such a deficiency exists?

TABLE OF THE EXPENSES OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN 1840.

SUPREME POWERS.	Dollars.	Total.
Poder Conservador,	30,000	
Legislature,	319,550	
Executive, Ministers, Council, Secretary, Archives, &c.	230,930	
Supreme Court,	79,300	
		$659,780
DIPLOMACY.		
Legations, Consuls, Commissioners, &c.		140,000
TREASURY.		
National Treasury, Almacenes generales, Direccion de Rentas, Heads of the Treasury, and Departmental Treasuries,	251,758 6	
Pensions to retired officers,	174,942	
Pensions of the *Mont de Piete*,	160,554	
		587,254 6
		$1,387,034 6

	Dollars.	Total.
	B't for'd,	$1,387,034 6
JUDICIARY.		
Salaries of Departmental Magistrates, Judges and Subalterns, - - - - - - - - -	———	1,207,376
POLITICAL.		
Governors, Secretaries, Departmental Juntas, Prefects, their Secretaries and sub-Prefects, - -	———	847,467
ECCLESIASTICAL.		
Bishoprics of Sonora and Yucatan, - - - -	15,200	
Missions, - - - - - - - - - -	31,930	
	———	47,130
INSTRUCTION, BENEVOLENCE, AND PUNISHMENT.		
Academy of San Carlos, - - - - - - -	13,000	
Museum, - - - - - - - - - -	5,600	
Conservatory of Chapultepec, and Professor of Botany,	2,200	
Colleges of St. Juan Lateran, Ildefonso, Espiritu Santo at Puebla, - - - - - - - -	20,000	
Professors in University at Mexico, - - - - -	7,613	
School of Surgery, - - - - - - - -	1,500	
Professors of Medical School or College, - - -	10,800	
Director of Institution of Medical Sciences, &c. &c.	2,160	
Hospitals, Prisons, Fortresses, - - - - -	180,000	
	———	260,409
SALARIES OF VARIOUS OFFICERS OF PALACE.		
Concièrge, - - - - - - - - - -	420	
Architect, - - - - - - - - -	200	
Chaplain, - - - - - - - - - -	600	
Two Porters, - - - - - - - - -	1,200	
Gardener, - - - - - - - - - -	1,000	
	———	3,420
RENTS, PENSIONS, ETC.		
Collegiate of N. S. of Guadalupe, - - - -	26,391 4 9	
Civil Pensions, - - - - - - - - -	70,178	
	———	96,596 4 9
Sundries, Printing, &c. &c. - - - - - - -	———	87,596 5 3
WAR OFFICE.		
Salaries of officers—(active,) - - - - - -	357,307 3 6	
" " " (on leave,) - - - - -	28,759 7 0	
" " " (retired,) - - - - - -	718,399 2 0	
Military *Mont de Piete*, - - - - - -	291,079 3 9	
Army, privates, and all other military expenses, -	6,604,379 7 9	
	———	8,000,000
DIVIDENDS ON FOREIGN DEBT, - - - -		1,155,922 2 5
		$13,155,922 2 5

Exclusive of the payment of loans and balances.

Mexico, 28th July, 1841.

The deficiencies to which I have alluded, on the page preceding the last tabular statement, must be still more apparent and lamentable after

an examination of a document which exhibits an expenditure of $8,000,000 (in a time of peace with all the rest of the world,) for a War Department, the *active* officers of which receive $357,397 a year, while the *retired* are paid *more than double* that amount; at the same time that the whole Civil Administration of the country costs but about four millions! This statement would appear to indicate a degree of necessary coercion and corruption, which are but slender promises of the growth of peace, glory, and prosperity. The feeble support given to public instruction by direct contributions of the Government I have already alluded to, and the reader may, at a glance, see how much is expended for punishment, and how little for instruction and benevolence. The army is constantly the fondling of the rulers of the day. By it they are elevated to power; by it they are sustained or defeated, and, relying on its bayonets rather than the hearts and *intellects* of the great masses of their countrymen, they are obliged to pay both well and promptly the masters they pretend to rule.

The cost of this branch of the service must have greatly increased in 1842 and 1843, in consequence of the meditated attack upon Texas and the actual conflict with Yucatan. I regret that I have no data upon these subjects; but it may fairly be calculated, that if the expenses were $8,000,000 in 1840, in a period of comparative tranquillity, (with the exception of a short revolution in the Capital,) they must have been swelled in 1842 and the present year, by the purchase of steamers and munitions of war, to near 10 or $12,000,000.

ARMY AND NAVY.

In regard to the numbers of the ARMY, I am equally without information since 1840; but I may state that the forces have been considerably augmented, and in all probability amount to 40,000 men. In 1840, the Mexican army was composed of

14 Generals of Division,	$500	per month.
26 " of Brigade,	375	" "

ARTILLERY.

3 Brigades, (on foot,)
1 " (mounted,)
5 Separate Companies.

ENGINEER CORPS.

1 Director General,		
3 Colonels,	235	" "
6 Lieutenant Colonels,	141	" "
1 Adjutant,	104	" "
14 Captains,	84	" "
16 Lieutenants,	62	" "
10 Sub-lieutenants,	39	" "

SAPPERS.

1 Battalion.

PLANA MAYOR DEL EJERCITO.

This was composed of the General-in-Chief and a number of Colonels, Lieutenant-Colonels, Captains, &c. &c.

PERMANENT INFANTRY.

8 Regiments of 2 battalions each, each battalion of 8 companies, each company of 112 men, officers included—or in all 14,336 persons: each *soldier is* paid, - - - - - - - $11 93¾ per month.

ACTIVE INFANTRY.

9 Regiments. This body differs from the preceding, or *Permanent* Infantry, in being liable to service only when required by Government; or, in other words, it is a sort of national militia, well drilled—Total number, 16,128.

PERMANENT CAVALRY.

8 Regiments, each regiment composed of 2 squadrons, each squadron of 2 companies. Each regiment composed, in all, of 676 men,—or the 8 of 4,056, at - - - - - - 12 50 " "

35 *Separate Companies* in various places throughout the Republic.

ACTIVE CAVALRY.

6 Regiments of 4 squadrons, each squadron of 2 companies.

NAVY.

THE NAVY OF MEXICO consists at present of 3 Steam Frigates, 2 Brigs, 3 Schooners, 2 Gunboats.*

MINES AND COINAGE.

In treating of the resources of men and money of Mexico, it will not be uninteresting (after knowing that the production of the mines amounts in value annually to about twenty-two millions, of which twelve find their way to the mints,) to present a statement of the total coinage of the country, derived from the records of the earliest periods to which access could be had.

* A paper published at Vera Cruz in 1845, furnishes the following list of the MEXICAN NAVY:—STEAMER GUADALOUPE of 778 tons, mounting two 68-pounders amidships, four 12-pound carronades, and one mortar.—STEAMER MONTEZUMA, 1100 tons, one 68-pounder amidships, two 32-pound carronades.—BRIG MEXICANO, one 12-pounder amidships, and fourteen 18-pound carronades. BRIG VERA CRUZANO LIBRA, one 32-pounder amidships, six 18-pound carronades, and two 12-pound carronades.—SCHOONER AGUILA, one 32-pounder amidships, and eight carronades.—SCHOONER LIBERTAD, one 12-pounder amidships.—GAFFTOPSAIL SCHOONER MORELOS, one 12-pounder amidships; and five GUNBOATS, each carrying a 24-pounder amidships. All these vessels want repairs.

In December, 1844, the MEXICAN ARMY (as *per* statement made to Congress) consisted of 1,840 ARTILLERY; 21,557 INFANTRY; 9,539 CAVALRY; making a total of near 33,000 men. This force is shown by official documents to have been reduced to less than 30,000. Since then the two Steamers have been sold.

TABLE OF THE COINAGE OF MEXICO FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT DAY.

The Mint of the City of Mexico was established in 1535, but there are no returns for the first 155 years, until 1690. If we take the average of the coinage of these years to have been $1,000,000, we shall have	$155,000,000
From 1690 to 1803, inclusive,	1,353,452,020
" 1803 to 1821, inclusive,	261,354,022
" 1822	5,543,254
" 1823	3,567,821
" 1824	3,503,880
" 1825	6,036,878
" 1825 to 1831 (on an average three millions per annum,)	15,000,000
" 1831	13,000,000
" 1832	12,500,000
" 1833	12,500,000
" 1834	12,040,000
" 1835	12,000,000
" 1836	12,050,000
" 1837	11,610,000
" 1838 to 1843 (averaging twelve millions,)	60,000,000
To this must be added the coinage of State mints not included in the above:	
Guanajuato, from 1812 to 1826	3,024,194
Zacatecas " 1810 to 1826	32,108,185
Guadalaxara, " 1812 to 1826	5,659,159
Durango, " 1811 to 1826	7,483,626
Chihuahua, " 1811 to 1814	3,603,660
Sombrerete, " 1810 to 1811	1,561,249
All of these for the five years (after 1826) since which they have been calculated in the general coinage,	60,000,000
Total	$2,068,597,948

This amount, you will see, is less than it has been made by several other writers.

THE CHURCH OF MEXICO—ITS WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.

The CHURCH OF MEXICO is the next and last topic to which I shall direct your attention, and I am compelled again to regret the want of an *accurate* account of the convents, properties, members, and wealth of the Religious Orders in 1842. I diligently sought information from individuals who should have been *au fait* on these subjects, yet I could gain from

them but little knowledge of an authentic character. I am satisfied, that this arose neither from a narrow distrust of foreigners, nor a Chinese dislike of divulging the secrets of their country. The want of a general work of reference on statistics is denounced, as "shameful and lamentable," by Señor Otero in his treatise on the social and political condition of Mexico.

"In 1842," says this writer, "we possess no publication upon Mexican statistics except the work of Baron Humboldt, written in 1804. That work, precious as it is, has become useless as a guide, in consequence of the immense changes during the intervention of a long and revolutionary period. A complete statistical treatise might be easily compiled without expense to the National Treasury, by merely obliging the functionaries of the Government to make regular and minute returns, which should be digested and edited by competent persons in the Capital. Without such a work it will be impossible to understand the complicated interests of this vast country, or to keep the machinery of its Government in successful operation."*

It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how the administrations carried on the affairs of the nation as long as they have done, without a system of statistical book-keeping, which is as necessary for them as a ledger is for the prudent merchant.

The Ministers of State have occasionally presented reports to the National Congresses upon the condition of their several Departments; but these productions have been brief, unsatisfactory, without detail, and rather involving the matters of which they treat in doubt and uncertainty, by their vague generalization, than clearly illustrating the interests, wants, and resources of the Republic.

Of all branches of the national administration, none has suffered more obscuration by this diplomatic rhetoric than the question of the Church, which properly belonged to the portfolio of the Minister of Public Justice and Instruction. It was a subject that men seemed fearful to approach. They admitted that there were abuses in the body;—that many of its members were corrupt, idle, ignorant, and vicious;—and that it enjoyed large revenues, flowing in a narrow stream, which, if suffered to diverge into smaller rivulets, would nourish the parched land and improve the condition of suffering multitudes. But wealth and property were banned and sanctified. The *establishment* was the *religion;* and he who ventured to assail the one must necessarily attack the other. Thus, even patriots who were not ordinarily affected by nervous dread, stood appalled at the first frown of priestly indignation, and trembled for their fate in a conflict between the temporal power and that tremendous spiritual influence which slept like an electric fire in the hearts of the people, ready, on the slightest impulse, to be kindled into a destructive flame.

It would be unjust, however, to leave you under the impression that the ministers of this church have been solely engaged in enriching them-

* Vide Otero, Cuestion Social y Politica, p. 30—31.

selves, and scandalizing the cause of true faith, as has been so often proclaimed by European travellers. Although many of them are unworthy persons, and notwithstanding their rites and ceremonies are often rather accommodated to a population scarcely emerged from the forests, than to intellectual man;—yet the wealth of the church has not been at all times devoted to base and sordid purposes, or used to corrupt its possessors and the people. Throughout the Republic no persons have been more universally the agents of charity and ministers of mercy, than the rural clergy. The village *curas* are the advisers, the friends and protectors, of their flocks. Their houses have been the hospitable retreats of every traveller. Upon all occasions they constituted themselves the defenders of the Indians, and contributed toward the maintenance of institutions of benevolence. They have interposed in all attempts at persecution, and, wherever the people were menaced with injustice, stood forth the champions of their outraged rights. To this class, however, the wealth of the church was of small import.

These virtues and devotion have served to fix the whole priesthood deeply in the hearts of the masses, and to attach the poor to their persons and enlist them in defence of their property. The priest, the creed, the church and its revenues, seemed to be *one and indivisible* in the notions of the people; and, in turn, the priesthood became jealous and watchful of the power which this very affection had created. Avarice was not wanting to increase their gains from dying penitents, pious bequests, holy offerings and lavish endowments. And thus (often grossly human while humbly good,) they have contrived, upon the same altar, to serve God and Mammon.

It is now quite natural, that they should desire to preserve the property which has been collected during so many years of religious toil and avaricious saving, and they dread the advance of that intellectual march which, in the course of time, will consign their monastic establishments to the fate of those of England and Spain. The combination of large estates, both real and personal, in the hands of a united class acting by spiritual influence, under the direction of one head, must be powerful in any country, but certainly is most to be dreaded in a Republic, where secret ecclesiastical influence is added to the natural control of extraordinary wealth.

It is difficult to say with accuracy, for the reasons I have already assigned, what this wealth at present is,—but I think the number of Convents, devoted to about two thousand NUNS in the Republic, is fifty-eight; for the support of which, (in addition to a floating capital of rather more than *four millions and a half*, with an income therefrom of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars,) they possess some seventeen hundred estates or properties, producing an annual revenue of about five hundred and sixty thousand dollars.

There are about three thousand five hundred SECULAR CLERGYMEN and seventeen hundred MONKS.

The *latter* possess one hundred and fifty Conventual establishments, divided as follows:

The Dominicans,	25
Franciscans,	68
Augustines,	22
Carmelites,	16
Mercedarios,	19
	150
Nuns,	2,000
Monks,	1,700
Secular Clergy,	3,500
	7,200

A number certainly inadequate to the spiritual wants of a population of seven millions, and yet too small to be proprietors of estates worth at least ninety millions of dollars, according to the annexed valuation:

Real property in town and country,	$18,000,000
Churches, houses, convents, curates, dwellings, furniture, *jewels*, precious vessels, &c.	52,000,000
Floating capital—together with other funds—and the capital required to produce the sum received by them annually in alms,	20,000,000
	$90,000,000

The real property is estimated to have been worth at least 25 per cent. more, previous to the Revolution, and, to this enhanced value must be added about $115,000,000 of capital, founded on "*contribuciones*" and "*derechos reales*," or *imposts* to which they were entitled, on the property of the country.*

The value of their churches, the extent of their city property, the power they possess as *lenders*, and the quantity of jewels, precious vessels, and golden ornaments, will raise the above statement, I am confident, to nearer $100,000,000 than ninety, or to a sum about *eighty-eight millions less* than it was before the outbreak of the war of Independence; at which period, the number of ecclesiastics is estimated to have been 10,000 or 13,000, including the lay-brotherhood and the subordinates of the church.

During the royal Government, the influence of these rich proprietors must necessarily have been exceedingly great. It was the policy of the Spanish cabinet to cherish the temporalities of the Mexican Church. The *mayorazgos* or rights of primogeniture, forced the younger sons either into the profession of arms or of religion; and it was requisite that ample provision should be made for them in secure and splendid establishments. Thus, all the lucrative and easy benefices came into the hands of Span-

* Vide Otero, p. 38, 39, 42.

iards or their descendants, and by far the greater portion of the more elevated ecclesiastics were persons of high birth or influential connections.

But the rights of primogeniture have been abolished. The laws of the Republic have taken away the power to collect *tithes* by compulsory processes. And the consequence is, that the church has become unpopular with the upper classes *as a means of maintenance*, while a comparatively democratic spirit has been infused into its members, who now spring from the humbler ranks. Still, however, the remaining wealth and the forces of clanship have preserved in their body a most powerful influence.

While this change has occurred in the church, the army has become equally unpopular with the upper ranks as a profession, and as its command is consequently intrusted to men who have arisen immediately from the people, or, in other words, as the same classes of society furnish both the church and the army, the church and the army will, in all probability, (while forming aristocracies in themselves,) sustain each other against the aristocracy of landed proprietors, and all who live upon their income without the necessity of labor.

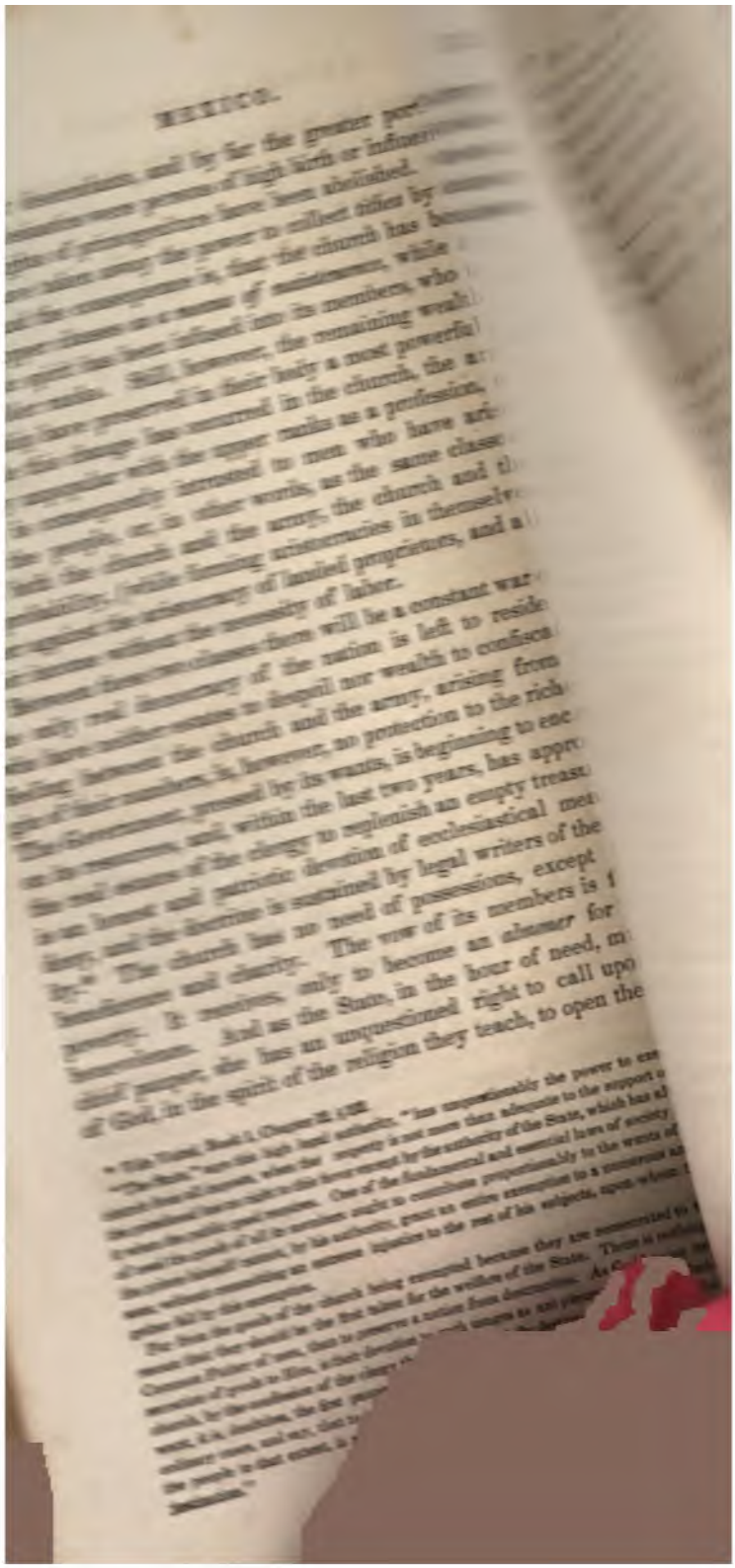
Between these two classes there will be a constant war of opinion, while the only real democracy of the nation is left to reside in individuals, who have neither estates to despoil nor wealth to confiscate. The fellow feeling between the church and the army, arising from the kindred origin of their numbers, is, however, no protection to the riches of the former. The Government, pressed by its wants, is beginning to encroach gradually on its resources, and, within the last two years, has appropriated parts of the real estates of the clergy to replenish an empty treasury. That such is an honest and patriotic devotion of ecclesiastical means, no one can deny, and the doctrine is sustained by legal writers of the highest authority.* The church has no need of possessions, except for purposes of beneficence and charity. The vow of its members is for chastity and poverty. It receives, only to become an *almoner* for more extensive benevolence. And as the State, in the hour of need, must ever be the chief pauper, she has an unquestioned right to call upon the ministers of God, in the spirit of the religion they teach, to open their coffers freely

* Vide Vattel, Book 1, Chapter 12, § 132.

"The State," says this high legal authority, "has unquestionably the power to exempt the property of the church from all imposts, when the property is not more than adequate to the support of the ecclesiastics. But the priesthood has no right to this favor except by the authority of the State, which has always the right to revoke it when the public good requires. One of the fundamental and essential laws of society is, that on all occasions of need the goods of all its members ought to contribute proportionably to the wants of the community. Even the prince himself cannot, by his authority, grant an entire exemption to a numerous and wealthy body of persons, without committing an extreme injustice to the rest of his subjects, upon whom the burden would altogether fall by this exemption.

Far from the goods of the church being exempted because they are consecrated to God,—it is for that very reason that they should be the first taken for the welfare of the State. There is nothing more agreeable to the Common Father of men, than to preserve a nation from destruction. As God has no need of property, the consecration of goods to Him, is their devotion to such usages as are pleasant to him. Besides, the property of the church, by the confession of the clergy themselves, is chiefly destined for the poor. Now, when the State is in want, it is, doubtless, the first pauper and the worthiest of succor. We may extend this reasoning to the most ordinary cases, and say, that to impose a part of the current expenses on the church property in order to relieve the people to that extent, is really to give those goods to the poor, according to the spirit of their original destination."

for the public good. With its ninety or one hundred millions of property and money, it might extinguish the national debt of eighty-four millions, and still leave an ample support for its seven thousand members, or, at least, for its Secular Clergy, who would be cherished and sustained more liberally by the masses for an act of such Christian sacrifice and benevolence.



LETTER XXXII.

POLITICAL HISTORY.

DARKNESS hangs upon both extremes of Mexican History. The ancient story of that beautiful country is lost in the gloom of tradition;—the detail of her colonial history is buried in Spanish archives;—her revolutionary history is blotted with blood;—her present is uncertain, and her future is impenetrable even to the eye of hope.

I will take the liberty to recall to you, however, some of the prominent events that have recently occurred, and the character and purposes of those to whom the nation owes its origin.

Cortéz was the personification of a period in the development of this Continent. Warrior, orator, statesman, poet, historian;—he blended in himself every requisite for a daring adventurer, and his success may well be esteemed the result of a single resolute mind over a whole Empire of mere physical force. He had the power to conceive and fashion his projects; to lead and control men; to fight; to diplomatize with cunning foes; to speak with fluency and eloquence to multitudes; to sing in sweet verse the lay of knight or lover, and, with becoming modesty and grace, to tell the tale of his own achievements in phrase befitting the ear of an enlightened monarch.* In fact, he was, in every quality, the proper person to lead so bold a band of Spaniards as that which gathered around his standard, when he unfurled it for the conquest of Mexico.

While the love of glory, and the enthusiasm of a bigot in religion, united with the most eminent loyalty to form the chief characteristics of Cortéz, the purposes and temper of those who joined his enterprise are much more questionable.

Spain required a vent for her population, and the new-found world afforded it. People of staid habits and regular morals were not tempted to the perils of an adventurous life; but there were thousands who had neither means nor objects sufficient to retain them on their native soil. Men of mark, but broken fortunes; rakes of old distinction, such as decay in the corrupting atmosphere of courts; noisy and riotous young men: soldiers, half bandit, half warrior; and all the offal of a society dissi-

* See the recent translation of his Dispatches to the Emperor, by Mr. Folsom, of New-York.

pated, hopeless and impoverished, and living without those sanctions and restraints that alone make life valuable or useful. Such were the reckless crews that first set forward in the conquest of this hemisphere, without the common sympathies of humanity; regardless of the laws of nature or nations, and, indeed, heedless of everything but the acquisition of treasure or territory, by a warfare that degenerated into the murder of people to whom the name of the Spanish king, or the idea of the Christian's God, had never been revealed, even in their wildest dreams.

Thus was the foundation of the new Empire laid, in the violent destruction of an ancient religion and monarchy.

Families of character and distinction soon came over, and the new domain was rapidly filled with a population willing to take advantage of its resources;—but several things impeded the social and moral progress of New Spain.

It was but a colony; and a colony, too, devoted by the mother country to none of those branches of industry that foster the independent and manly growth of a people, and bring out the mind of a nation. *It was the mine and mint of Spain.*

It was taught to believe, that silver was a sort of vegetable product of the earth, growing like flowers, and to be had for the asking. And thus at the outset of its career, the germ of *industrious self-reliance* and independence, was withdrawn from the fostering policy of the parent State. Commerce, manufactures, and an extensive agriculture,—looking to all parts of the world as its consumers,—were discouraged, and the infant colony was forced to receive from Spain the results of *her* industry, while, in turn, it sent nothing back that indicated genius, talent, activity, enterprise, invention;—or, indeed, anything but that its valleys and hills contained exhaustless quantities of precious metals, which it could drag from their recesses and transmute into coin by the labor of enslaved and ignorant Indians.

Nor was New Spain opened to the *colonization* of other nations, who might have been invited to a healthful and energizing mixture of races. On the contrary, the Spaniards grafted themselves upon the conquered and debased aborigines, and the mongrel blood became dull and indolent.

Although the laws of the Indies were calculated to protect the natives, they, nevertheless, suffered dreadfully under the proscriptive administration of colonial power; and, becoming the victims of avarice, were gradually degraded, step by step, to the helot condition in which we find them at the present day.

"Instead of restraints on the claims of ecclesiastics, the inconsiderate zeal of the Spanish legislators," says Dr. Robertson, "admitted them into America to their full extent, and at once imposed on the Spanish colonies a burden, which is in no slight degree oppressive to society, even in its most improved state. As early as the year 1501, the payment of tithes in the colonies was enjoined, and the mode of it regulated by law. Every

article of primary necessity, toward which the attention of new settlers must naturally be turned, was submitted to this grievous exaction. Nor were the demands of the clergy confined to articles of simple and easy culture. Its more artificial and operose productions, such as sugar, indigo and cochineal, were declared to be *titheable;* and thus the industry of the planter was taxed in every stage of its progress, from its rudest essay to its highest improvement. To the weight of this legal imposition, the zeal of the American Spaniards made many voluntary additions;—they bestowed profuse donations on churches and monasteries, and thus, unprofitably wasted a large proportion of that wealth, which might have nourished and given vigor to productive labor in a growing colony."

The Spaniard found a beautiful world,—a land bathed by two oceans, rising from one and sloping to the other,—and on both acclivities possessing all the climates of the world, from the graceful shadow of the palm on the sea-shore, to eternal ice on the mountains overhanging the Valley of Mexico. All these climates *on the same parallel of latitude*, produced cotton, sugar, tobacco, rice, cochineal, wheat, barley, corn, wine, and every variety of luscious fruit; while, over all, an eternal spring bent its blue and cloudless skies. And, as if the *surface* of the earth were not sufficient to pamper the most craving appetites of her creatures, nature had veined the secret depths of the mountains with silver and precious materials, in exhaustless quantities. Yet, this prolific richness served but to hasten the destinies of the invaders, and to make them careless, dependent and idle.

The parallel has so frequently been attempted, that it would perhaps be profitless to contrast the settlers of this alluring country with the equally enthusiastic but hardy and toilsome bands who peopled our north. But, it may not be unwise to remember the stability we have attained, on dreary and inhospitable coasts, by the steady march of faith, liberty, and the purity of enterprise; while our southern neighbors, more favored by soil and seasons, have failed in producing the results of social and political peace, under the influence of a different creed, and the corruptions of a monarchical Government.

We have *now*, however, to deal with a *new* people. Mexico has thrown off the dominion of old Spain, and there is no marvel greater, in history, than that an Empire, with enervated character,—oppressed, ignorant, and almost destroyed as was this colony,—should still have had the spirit to discover and assert her rights. She cast aside the allurements of rank; she converted her whole territory into a battle-field; she tore herself from all the fast-rooted allegiances and loyalties of three centuries; she abandoned fortune; she went through fifteen years of civil slaughter,—and, at length, alone, unaided, unsympathized with by the rest of the world, she achieved her independence. For the victory over such obstacles, Mexico deserves praise. She deserves more. She deserves the high and

unqualified respect of the world, and especially of that portion of it which, *par excellence*, pretends to be the fostering parent of human rights and liberty throughout the globe. It proves that she possesses a sense of right, a virtue of endurance, a devotion to principle;—and that, with domestic peace, she would assume among the nations of the earth the high place to which she is entitled, by the genius of her children and the magnificence of her Empire.

Let me now invoke your attention to a brief historical outline of the Mexican Revolution, and its consequences.

It was not until the mother country, herself, became temporarily subjected to a foreign Power, that the war of Independence was successfully commenced in her possessions on this Continent. That war had its origin as much in a desire of independence of France, as of Spain; but it was too late to quell entirely the growing love of liberty, after the restoration of Ferdinand VII. in 1814.

When Spain, in the following year, made her chief effort against her rebellious colonies, by the noted expedition from Cadiz under Morillo, those colonies might still have been within her control if proper means had been resorted to by the directors of her councils. And it is the opinion of distinguished statesmen, that had she succeeded in "reducing the coast of Terra Firma and New Grenada, the provinces of La Plata, divided among themselves, and weakened by the Portuguese occupation of Monte Video, would, in all probability, not have held out against her power."

But there were a thousand things to exasperate the war of Independence. It was not only a war of freedom, but of *caste;* and it is almost impossible to credit the atrocities with which it was prosecuted against the insurgents.

After the first successes of the Mexicans, there was a period of reaction when the Spaniards again obtained a temporary mastery under CALLEJA, and the annals of the time teem with accounts of the sanguinary vengeance wreaked by that inhuman monster on the victims who fell within his grasp. After he obtained possession of the revolted city of Guanajuato, he caused the inhabitants to be driven into the great Square of the town, and *near fourteen thousand men, women and children were butchered, like cattle, on the spot.* Proclaiming that "powder and ball were too costly to be wasted in their execution," he let loose his soldiery on the defenceless crowd, with an order "*to cut their throats,*"—and it is related, that the fountains and gutters of the city, literally ran with human blood!*

These were things to be remembered and to exasperate. There was no longer any hope for the people. There was no disposition to temporize or conciliate. It was submission or death. And the "una salus victis nullam sperare salutem," nerved their arms and forced them into ardent and continued resistance.

They conquered. I will not go over the whole detail of the Revolution. On the 24th of February, 1821, the Plan of Iguala was declared. Shortly

* Vide Robinson's History of the Mexican Revolution.

afterward, Iturbidé ascended the Imperial throne, to enjoy a short and troubled reign; and it was, perhaps, by the false direction given to public sentiment and the ideas of the masses at this early moment of Independence, that we may attribute the subsequent disorders of the Republic. It is true, that Mexico was not then prepared for perfect democracy; but as the nation required a patriotic direction, efforts should have been made, under proper checks and balances, to win the minds of the people to a love of those free institutions which the pure and intellectual men of the country have been ever desiring. Dissatisfied as the Mexicans were with the administration and principles of Iturbidé, they resorted to no acts of violence against an individual who had so signally aided them in their recent conflict. They provided an ample support for himself and family, after his dethronement, and on the eleventh of May, 1823, he sailed for Leghorn.

It is at this period that, in fact, commences the portion of Mexican history with which it is our chief interest to deal. The war of Independence, as we have seen, was a war of escape. It settled no principle,—established no system. And when the old order of things had entirely disappeared, the question rose as to what should be the government hereafter. Independence had opened the rest of the world to the inspection of the Mexicans. They beheld the progress of art, civilization, and freedom among their immediate neighbors at the north, and they resolved to adopt our system.

After the departure of the Emperor, the Government remained provisionally in the hands of Bravo, Victoria, and Negrete; and a National Representative body, after a session of fourteen months, formed a Constitution, (proclaimed on the 4th of October, 1824,) by which the sixteen original States were united in a *Federal Republic*.

On the 1st of January, 1825, the first Congress under this Constitution assembled in the City of Mexico, and General Victoria was installed as President of the Republic. During the administration of this person, the spirit of discontent already broke forth among the ambitious spirits of the country, and there were several "*Pronunciamientos*," or declarations of distinguished men, seconded by portions of the military, intended to excite revolutionary movements against the existing Government.

The first of these *gritos* was headed by Robato and Colonel Staboli, and designed, as they declared, to deprive every *Spaniard* throughout the country, of public employment. The next, was by Padre Arénas, against the Federative System, and in favor of Centralism;—and another, (also against *federation*,) called the "Plan of Montanyo," was made at Tulancingo, but soon suppressed by Guerrero.

Upon the whole, however, the administration of Victoria passed off with some degree of popularity, until near its close, when the two great parties of the country became embodied and powerful in the associations known as the *Escoceses* and *Yorkinos*, or, Scotch and York lodges.

The *Escoceses*, or Scotch party, was decidedly in favor of the establishment of a political power with central strength, if not, indeed, of bringing

the country back again to its ancient allegiance. Its rival party, or *Yorkino*, meanwhile, was as positively opposed to all foreign interference, central rule and monarchial tendencies, as it was devoted to Federation and Republicanism.

The influence of State Rights and Federation were known to be hostile to the centralization and efficacy of arbitrary powers; and there is but little doubt, that the aristocratic faction was favored in its operations by those European powers and their emissaries, who sought to gain by intrigue an influence on this Continent which they had lost in the recent wars. It is alleged, by some, that this was perceived by the Minister who so ably represented us at that period, with the new Republic; and he is charged with having procured the charter for the opposing *lodge*, and with fostering and stimulating the designs and leaders of the democratic party. It is not necessary for me to treat of the propriety with which a foreign Minister could interfere in the domestic strifes of the Government to which he is accredited, nor do I believe that Mr. Poinsett ever stepped beyond the limits of his official duties and rights in regard to these matters in Mexico. Yet I cannot but think it was both his right as a man, and his duty as a diplomatist, (faithfully representing a republican nation near another Republic on the American Continent,) to do all in his power, lawfully, to cherish and vivify the spirit of freedom in the country to which he was accredited, and to overcome the efforts of European powers for the establishment of a state of things directly hostile to American principles and interests. It is unnecessary for me to pursue this subject further, as the wisdom of such diplomacy must be evident to all who know the difficulties and temptations with which a young, inexperienced, and distracted Republic is surrounded at the outset of its political existence.

But the term of Victoria's administration was not to end without some signal opposition to himself personally. In December, 1827, General Bravo denounced the President as connected with the Yorkinos. He took arms against the Government, proclaimed himself in open revolt, and was speedily subdued and banished; but the seed of discord had been already deeply sown; and in the election which subsequently occurred, Gomez Pedraza, who was the candidate of the Escoceses, obtained the Presidency by a majority of but *two* votes over Guerrero, his competitor. Thus, amid the most angry excitement of embittered parties, terminated the first chief magistracy of the new Republic.

It should be recollected, that during this administration Iturbidé had returned from his banishment, and was shot almost immediately after landing. It is the general impression, that this act was not desired by the Government, and that the execution of the illustrious patriot was alone owing to the indiscreet zeal of his captor.

Scarcely had Pedraza been elected, when symptoms of discontent were manifested among the liberals. The Yorkinos had been foiled most un-

expectedly, and by a mere nominal majority; but they were not content to bow with submission, like good republicans, to the will of the people expressed according to the forms of a Federal Constitution. The consequence was, that before the new President had taken his seat, SANTA ANNA made his appearance on the political stage, and, under the plea that the election of Pedraza had been produced by fraud, "*pronounced*" against him at the head of a small but determined force. The movement became speedily popular. The prejudices of the *Creoles*, or natives, against the *Spaniards* and their aristocratic partisans, were skillfully played upon, and the *émeute* resulted on the 4th of December, 1828, in the "*Pronunciamiento* of the *Acordada*" in favor of the defeated candidate, Guerrero. The City of Mexico was given up to a mob; the Parian was sacked; the defenceless Spaniards suffered from the resentment of an infuriate populace; and Pedraza (abandoning the post of Minister of War to his opponent, Santa Anna,) fled from the country, and took refuge in the United States. On the first of January, 1829, Congress declared Guerrero to *have been duly elected President*;—Bustamante was named Vice-President; and the government went once more into quiet operation under the *old Constitution*.

The ease with which the supreme authority could be destroyed or established by a bold and daring chieftain, had been now most fatally demonstrated for the future peace of the country; and ambitious spirits were not long wanting to take advantage of this dangerous facility. Scarcely had Guerrero been seated in the presidential chair, and signalized his duplicity by desiring the recall of Mr. Poinsett, when Bustamante, *who came into power with him as Vice-President*, organized the army at Jalapa, and upon some trifling pretext, "*pronounced*" in that city. Santa Anna at first feebly opposed this movement, but at length joined the discontented General. The revolution was made effectual;—Guerrero was overthrown, and fled;—the Vice-President, Bustamante, assumed the reins of government, and under his administration, the Spanish power was finally subdued by the victory gained by Santa Anna over Barradas, on the 11th of September, 1829, at Tampico. The unfortunate Guerrero was in the meantime taken prisoner, and, in 1831, was executed *for treason*.

After this, tranquillity prevailed until 1832, when Santa Anna—who in fact had been the author of the present dynasty—suddenly "*pronounced*" against the Ministers, and soon afterward against the President himself, at Vera Cruz. A battle was fought at Tolomi, and the insurgents defeated;—but he retired again to Vera Cruz, strengthened his power by forces from some other Departments, declared himself in favor of Pedraza, (*whom he had driven out of the country two years previous*,) entered into a convention with Bustamante at Zavaleta, in December of 1832, and —having dispatched a vessel for the exiled Pedraza—brought him back to the Republic and sent him to the Capital, to serve out the remaining *three months* of his unexpired term!

The first act of the restored President was to eulogize his foe and friend, and his last, (in the brief power allowed him,) to exercise his influence in controlling an election to the chief magistracy, by which this skillful Warwick was elevated to supreme power on the 16th of May, 1833.

Santa Anna was not, however, to be safe from the perils that had beset his predecessors. He had given a fearful example of discontent to the country, and—notwithstanding his known and dreaded vigor—in the first year of his presidency, a "*Pronunciamiento*," (central in its character,) was made by Escalada, at Morelia, in favor of the "*fueros*" of the church and army. About this period he was proclaimed Dictator by the army at Cuautla—an office he refused to accept—and, immediately marching a sufficient force against the insurgents, he suppressed the revolutionary movement at Guanajuato.

In 1835, there was another "*Pronunciamiento*" against the Government in Zacatecas, which was quelled; and, in a few days after the victory over General Garcia, there was another declaration, known in the history of the country as the "Plan of Toluca," which is generally believed to have been favored by the President himself.

This Plan struck a fatal blow at the Federative System. It destroyed the Constitution of 1824;—it vested the power in a Central Government; abolished the Legislatures of the States, and changed those States into Departments, under the control of military commandants and governors, who were responsible to the chief authorities of the nation alone. This was the last great act in Mexico of the military President, and its principles formed the basis of the "CENTRAL CONSTITUTION," adopted in 1836, in lieu of the Federal Constitution of 1824.

While these things were occurring, the revolt in Texas had become so formidable, that it appeared necessary for the Mexican Government to strike a decisive blow against the rebellious province. Accordingly, as soon as Santa Anna had assured himself of the establishment of Centralism, he departed with the flower of his troops to reconquer Texas. The fate of that memorable expedition is too well known to require notice in this sketch. The regulator of his own country and the conqueror of the Spaniards, lost both his liberty and his reputation in a conflict against another race at the battle of San Jacinto; and it is perhaps owing to the private interposition of our own President, and the popularity, at that period, of Houston, that his life was preserved from a population infuriate with the memory of massacres that emulated the butcheries of Calleja. But he was both spared and liberated, and returned, through the United States, to his farm at Manga de Clavo, where, suffering under exceeding unpopularity with his countrymen, he buried himself for a long period in obscurity and retirement.

When Santa Anna departed from the Capital on this luckless adventure, he left the administration in the hands of General Barragan, as President. This person, however, shortly died, and the government was

conducted subsequently by Coro, until Bustamante (whose friends had taken advantage of Santa Anna's misfortunes and unpopularity, to elect him to the Presidency under the new Constitution,) returned from France, where he had resided since his defeat.

Almost immediately after the accession of this distinguished personage to the chief magistracy, there were *émeutes* in favor of Federation, and Gomez Farias, who was then in prison; but these, and a number of other trifling conspiracies, were at once put down by Pedraza and Rodriguez.

The most brilliant, however, of all the exploits for the emancipation of Mexico, occurred in 1838, under the unfortunate Mexia. He advanced toward the Capital with a brave band of patriots, and was encountered in the neighborhood of Puebla by Valencia and Santa Anna, who, creeping forth from his retreat to regain popularity by some striking exploit, was weakly trusted by the man he had already so often foiled. Mexia lost the day, and with scarce time left for prayer or communication with his family, was shot, by order of his conqueror, on the field of battle.*

In the winter of that year, the port of Vera Cruz was blockaded by the French squadron, and the town attacked by the troops. This again afforded an opportunity to the victim of San Jacinto to repair his tarnished reputation by military glory, and to regain his standing with the army. Accordingly he at once repaired to the port, took command of the troops, and, while following the French, as they retreated to their boats, received a wound, which has lamed him for life. But this loss was a gain to the daring chieftain; and well-worded proclamations, and a discreet use of the amputated limb, (even to the present day, as we have seen in a preceding letter,) have served to restore him to the authority he so ingloriously lost in 1836.†

Yet he did not think that the time for him to appear again prominently on the political arena had then arrived, and he consequently remained quiet during the "*Pronunciamiento*" of the Federalists at the Palace of Mexico, on the 15th of July, of 1840, under Urrea, which was completely suppressed by Valencia, although President Bustamante, was at one time a prisoner in the hands of the insurgents.

In August of 1841, however, a different state of things existed; and it was then that the last (it is to be hoped) of the sanguinary revolutions which have distracted Mexico, broke out. This insurrection was announced by the "*Pronunciamiento*" of Paredes in Guadalaxara, and was quickly

* "You are right," said he to Santa Anna, when he was refused a respite; "*I would not have granted you half the time, had I conquered!*"

† Santa Anna causes the 5th of December to be celebrated in Mexico, as a day of Victory over the French. They tell a story of him at Vera Cruz, which is illustrative of his cunning. One morning, early, during the siege, a party of French soldiers had made its way into the town and got possession of the house in which Santa Anna was lodged. As soon as he was disturbed by the noise of the troops, he jumped out of bed, and in his shirt and trowsers, attempted to escape. On the stairs he met the soldiers, headed by the *Prince de Joinville*, who immediately demanded, "Where is Santa Anna?" "There," said he, pointing over his shoulder with his thumb to a room in which another General was quietly sleeping. "And who are you?" said the Prince. "Oh! nobody," said Santa Anna, "nobody but a servant of the house." The Prince pushed on in a hurry to secure the General, while the General as hurriedly pushed for the door!

enforced by Valencia and Lombardini in the Capital, and Santa Anna himself, at Vera Cruz. Its causes were various and indefinite;—but the chief matters of popular discontent, viz., the consumption duty of 15 per cent., and the Constitution of '36, were entirely beyond the control of the existing administration. The "*Pronunciamientos*" of the Generals were succeeded by a month's contest in the streets of Mexico; a bombardment of the Capital; some harmless conflicts between the rival troops on the adjacent plains,—and the drama was ended by the downfall of Bustamante, the elevation of Santa Anna to the Provisional Presidency, and the "Plan of Tacubaya," (as a substitute for the Constitution,) by the seventh article of which, he was invested with dictatorial powers.

It was provided by this Plan, that a Congress should assemble in 1842, to form a new Constitution for the government of the Republic; and, accordingly, in June of that year, a corps of patriotic citizens, *chosen by the people*, met for that purpose in the Capital. This Congress was greeted by the Provisional President, in a speech, strongly declaring his partiality for a firm and *central* Government, but intimating, nevertheless, his entire disposition to acquiesce in the final decision of that intelligent body.

Yet, in December of last year, after two attempts to form a system that would accommodate the wishes of the country *and* the administration,—the Provisional President, (in spite of the frank disclosure of his intention to submit to the popular will,) dissolved the Congress without authority, and convened a JUNTA OF NOTABLES for the purpose of proposing a new Constitution. The result of the deliberations of that body were, the "BASES OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC,"* proclaimed on the 13th of June, 1843.

By the first Title of this Instrument, it is declared that Mexico adopts the form of a *Popular Representative* system for its government; that the territory shall be divided into Departments; that the political power essentially resides in the *Nation*, and that the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic creed is professed and protected *to the exclusion of all others*.

The second Title declares that slavery is not to be permitted;—that no one is to be molested for his opinions, or called on for contributions, except such as are regularly imposed by law.

The third Title specifies who are Mexican citizens, their rights and obligations. CITIZENS are—all who are born within the Mexican territory, or beyond it, of a Mexican father;—all who were in Mexico in 1821, and have not renounced their allegiance;—all who were natives of Central America when it belonged to the Mexican nation, and since then have continued to reside in Mexico;—and, lastly, all who have obtained or shall obtain letters of naturalization.

In order to enjoy fully the rights of Mexican citizenship, (in voting,) the following qua ifications are required. Being Mexicans, they must be eighteen years of age and married, or twenty-one years, if not married; and they must enjoy an annual income of at least two hundred dollars,

* This is the title of the system. It is not called a CONSTITUTION.

derived from actual capital, industry, or *honest personal labor*. In addition to these requirements, no one will be allowed to vote, after the year 1850, *unless he is able to read and write*.

The *rights of citizenship* are suspended (among other disqualifications,) by domestic servitude, habitual intemperance, taking of religious vows, keeping of prohibited gaming-houses, and fraudulent bankruptcy.

The Legislative power is defined by the fourth Title. This power is to reside in a Congress, divided into a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate.

The CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES is to be composed of individuals elected by the Electoral Colleges of the Departments, in a manner which will be hereafter specified, and in the ratio of one for seventy thousand inhabitants. The Departments which have not so many residents shall, nevertheless, be entitled to a Deputy, and there shall likewise be one for every fraction over thirty-five thousand. It is required, that a Deputy shall be thirty years of age, and possessed of an annual income of twelve hundred dollars. A moiety of the Chamber is to be renewed every two years.

The SENATE is to be composed of sixty-three members, two-thirds of whom are to be elected by the Departmental Assemblies, and the other third by the Chamber of Deputies, the President of the Republic, and the Supreme Court of Justice. One-third of this body is to be renewed biennially. The Departmental Assemblies are to select five persons from each of the classes of agriculturists, miners, proprietors or merchants, and manufacturers; the rest of the quota to be chosen by them from distinguished individuals. Those who are to be appointed by the President and the Supreme Court, are to be taken from among individuals who have signalized themselves in the civil, military, and ecclesiastical career. Senators must possess an annual income of two thousand dollars.

The Congress, so constituted, will sit twice a year for the space of three months, commencing its terms on the 1st of January and 1st of July Its members are not allowed to obtain place or preferment from the Government, except for the most imperative reasons.

A third body, called the Permanent Deputation, is to be formed by this Congress, and will be composed of four members of the Senate and five of the Chamber, whose term of office shall continue until the next meeting of the National Assembly and the election of their successors. The duty of this Permanent Deputation is to call extra sessions of Congress whenever they may be decreed by the Government, and to receive the certificates of the election of President of the Republic, Senators, and Ministers of the Supreme Court of Justice.

The fifth Title defines the EXECUTIVE POWER, which is confided *for five years* to a President, who must be a Mexican by birth, in the full enjoyment of all his rights of citizenship, more than forty years of age, and a resident of the Republic at the time of his election.

Among the numerous duties prescribed for him by the Bases, are the following:

To impose fines not exceeding $500 on those who disobey his orders, and are wanting in due respect and obedience to the laws.

To see that prompt justice is administered; to visit the tribunals whenever he is informed of delays, or that prejudicial disorders exist in those bodies; to require that a preference be given to causes concerning the public welfare, and to exact information touching the same whenever it may be deemed proper.

To object ("*hacer observaciones*") within thirty days (after audience of the Council, which will be hereafter described,) to the projects of laws approved by the Chambers, suspending their operation in the mean time. If the project be reapproved, the Government may suspend it until the near termination of the period when the Chambers can consider the subject. If it be then approved by two-thirds of both bodies, the Government will be obliged to publish it as a law. If the thirty days terminate after the regular period of the session, the Government is to direct its observations to the Permanent Deputation; and if the term pass without any action by the President, the law will be considered as sanctioned, and published without delay.

The President may *declare war*, and dispose of the armed forces of the nation as he sees fit, according to the objects of their institution. He may expel from the Republic unnaturalized foreigners, who are deemed dangerous; and he may name orators from the Council to defend the opinions of the Government before the Chambers.

THE COUNCIL OF THE GOVERNMENT is to be composed of seventeen persons named *by the President*, whose tenure of office is perpetual, and whose duties are to give their aid to the Government in all matters required in these Bases, and others upon which it shall be proper to consult them. It is their privilege, moreover, to propose to the Government all regulations and systems they may deem necessary for the public good in every branch of the administration.

By the sixth Title, the JUDICIAL POWER of the country is deposited in a Supreme Court, in Departmental Tribunals, and others already established by law. There is to be a *perpetual* Court Martial, chosen by the President.

The GOVERNMENT OF THE DEPARTMENTS is regulated by the seventh Title.

Each Department is to have an Assembly composed of not more than *eleven*, nor less than *seven*, who must be twenty-five years of age, and possessed of the qualifications required for a Deputy to Congress. Their term of office is four years.

The powers of these Assemblies are very simple and irresponsible, and scarcely amount to more than a species of municipal police, the whole

of which is subject to the review of the President of the Republic, and of a Governor appointed by the President.

Title eighth, relates to the ELECTORAL POWER.

The population of Mexico is divided into sections of *five hundred inhabitants* for the election of primary Juntas, and the citizens will vote, by ticket, for one elector for every *five hundred inhabitants*. These *primary* electors will name the *secondary*, who are to form the ELECTORAL COLLEGE of the Department in the ratio of *one secondary* elector for every *twenty* of the *primary*. This Electoral College, again, will elect the Deputies to Congress, and the members of the Departmental Assembly; and its members must have an income qualification of at least five hundred dollars per annum.

On the 1st of November of the year previous to the expiration of the Presidential term, each Departmental Assembly, by a majority of votes, or, in case of a tie, by lot, will select a person as President for the succeeding five years. There is no clause in the Instrument limiting the term or terms for which an individual may be elected, or prescribing a mode of supplying the vacancy occasioned by his death, resignation, or incompetency.

Such is an outline of the chief features of this remarkable Document. At its opening, it declares the establishment of a Popular Representative Government, yet nothing can be less *popular* in its provisions than the Instrument itself. The people are divided into classes of Citizens and Inhabitants. Property qualifications are created, while domestic servants. and the clergy, (no matter how honest, excellent and virtuous they may be,) are disfranchised in the same category with gamblers and drunkards, though they possess both the required income and education.

The opinion of the people is not to be taken directly by vote in regard to the men who are to represent them in the Departments and in Congress, or to govern them in the Presidency; but their sentiments are to be filtered through three bodies of Electors before their representation is finally effected. And, last of all, the supreme power is vested in a CENTRAL Government, while the people are left with scarce a shadow of authority over their homes and interests in the Departments.

It will be at once observed, that President Santa Anna has thus succeeded in enforcing his favorite scheme of Centralism. He must, therefore, become directly responsible for its results, whether for evil or for good, and the glory or disgrace of his country, in the estimation of all foreign countries, must alight upon his head alone.

Qualifications, property, and the intrenchments of power, fortify him on every side. He is very distant from the people. The four millions of Mexican Indians, (scarcely one of whom ever had an annual income of two hundred dollars in his life,) must always be unrepresented in the Government. No hope is proposed to them of advancement or regeneration; while the Chief Magistrate, himself, is surrounded by a complicated machine, that wants every element of democratic simplicity, and possesses a thousand inlets to corruption and mismanagement. If it operates well, it secures strong central authority. If it operates badly, it must break to pieces like some cumbrous engine destroyed by the confusion and multiplicity of its forces.

In either event, the President may deem himself safe. If the Bases succeed in giving peace, progress, and prosperity to Mexico, he will have the honor of the movement. But if he finds that they are not efficacious, or are likely to injure his schemes, it will be a task neither of difficulty nor danger, in so complicated a maze, to loosen some trifling screw, or throw some petty wheel from its axle, by which the whole must be disarranged without the responsibility of even its humblest engineers.

So long as the President rules under an instrument which gives him complete control of the army, the power to declare war, entire patronage of the civil list, the right to impose fines, veto laws, and interfere with the judiciary;—he will possess an authority too great to be intrusted to any one individual in our day and generation.

In the preceding sketch of Mexican Republicanism for the last twenty years, you will observe that I have not aimed to give an extended notice of the various leaders who placed themselves at the head of different movements. I have not done so, because I perceived no evidence of a *progressive* principle throughout the revolutions. The Government has generally been strong enough to suppress all disturbances but those that were countenanced by Santa Anna. With a true love of freedom among a few, a scramble for power among others, and carelessness or supineness among the great body of the people,—the country has gone on blundering from revolution to revolution, without advancing nearer to liberty and enlightenment than did the Barons of old when they sallied forth on feudal forays against each other.

LETTER XXXIII.

POLITICAL PROSPECTS OF MEXICO.

THERE are in Mexico but two important classes of people, without any numerous and distinctive body of enlightened lawyers or merchants, who, together with the educated and respectable mechanics and agriculturists, would counterbalance the influence of the church and the army.

Almost every respectable man you meet on the streets, bears some military insignia upon his person; and when the troops are abroad, you will frequently find them commanded by beardless urchins of not more than fifteen or sixteen years. In this manner, important families and extensive connections are secured by a patronage which amounted, in the year 1841, (as we have seen,) to the enormous sum of eight millions of dollars.

The other important class (but with diminished power,) is composed of the clergy, who,—you will remember from the statistics already recorded in these letters,—have accumulated a large share of the real property of the Republic, in addition to the immense personal wealth that swells their coffers.

Thus, between the army and the church, (one by the direct influence of authority and force, and the other by as dreaded spiritual weapons,) the whole nation is surrendered to but two influences, while the body of the people is too ignorant and disunited, and the men of wealth and education are too supine or peaceful, to interfere in behalf of the democratic progress of their country. You are warned of this double dominion by the constant sound of the drum and the bell, which ring in your ears from morn to midnight and drown the sounds of industry and labor.

It will be at once perceived, that, in such a state of society, there are none either to express a disinterested *public opinion* in favor of really free institutions, or to sustain them with manly energy.

I confess, that I have studied the history of her civil commotions without satisfaction, in seeking for the causes of this political condition of Mexico. They have always appeared to me (as I before said,) to be entirely objectless, and rather momentary *disorders* than well devised revolutions. They have been utterly unprogressive, and never enforced or decided a principle.

The result is, that in such a bungling system of strife, THE PEOPLE have had neither peace nor advancement, while incessant commotion

has disturbed the healthful action of internal police, and consequently impaired the morals of the masses.

It must be remembered that when Mexico threw off the Spanish yoke, it was at first rather to get rid of her rulers than of her system;—more to overthrow *foreign* tyranny and colonial subjection, than to establish a Republic. The original Plan of Iguala, to which Iturbidé adhered, proposed the offer of the Mexican Crown to Ferdinand, as a separate sovereignty from that of Spain. Events prevented the fulfillment of this scheme; and as soon as Iturbidé became successful in his military career, he influenced his soldiery (contrary to the wishes of the people, as expressed in Congress,) to proclaim him Emperor.

Had there been intelligence, virtue, and power enough among the masses to resist this encroachment in the bud; or, had Iturbidé imitated Washington, in the possession of a limited authority together with great popular *confidence*, he might have laid deeply and firmly the foundation of a Republican Constitution. The people would have bestirred themselves liberally in systems of National Education and improvement, and a free Press would have completed the project by disseminating the principles of freedom to every nook and corner of the country. Instead of this, however, the mass of good and educated men—unaided by liberal example from the Government—found it impossible to unleaven the mob of Spanish monarchism, or, to teach it to govern itself. Party spirit began to rage without stint and for feigned objects. The contest was between the possessors of power and the aspirants. The Yorkinos represented or pretended to represent the republican or advance party. The Escoceses——the aristocratic, or antagonists of a too liberal grant of popular rights and privileges. In this manner the whole country has been converted, by turns for twenty years, into a camp or battle-field. The army (without a foreign war,) is regarded as a separate body, created and supported—not to guard the nation against invading enemies—but to protect the Government against the people; and the church, in the meanwhile, naturally leans in favor of that powerful support which preserves its property and its Orders.

A long continued disturbance of the nation, like this, has of course checked industry and prevented emigration from abroad. It has made agriculture but a menial toil;—it has created an aristocracy of arms and spiritual power;—it has covered the people with foreign debt and domestic embarrassment;—it has taught the masses to suffer control and to lose independence;—it has forced the Government to mortgage every resource at ruinous interest;—it has fostered the most extensive political corruption that ever beggared a nation, and has afforded an opportunity, amid all this turmoil, to successive bands of ambitious plunderers to grow rich on the public spoil.

The lesson of chicanery and corruption taught to its colony by old Spain,—through her injustice and oppression,—became a principle of action, and duplicity was raised to the rank of a virtue.

Nations, habituated to be ruled for centuries, cannot rule themselves in a minute. People must learn to think for themselves, and, in order to do so, must be instructed. Agriculture must be cherished, and farmers made to elevate themselves in society;—to become rich by their toil, and cultivated by study. The mechanical class must become ambitious of being something more than the mere servant of the capitalist's wants;—in fine, all classes must shake off that lethargy, which, arising either from old habits, or an enervating climate, makes them the servants of the passing hour, and content with bare existence.

As the agriculture of the country is chiefly in the hands of rich proprietors and of the church, that branch of independence has no *general* influence. The mass of the mechanical class is exceedingly poor, and indescribably ignorant; and large portions of other classes are avaricious, gambling and bigoted, while over all extends that spiritual power, which still exercises an influence little inferior to the army.

Such a population,—ignorant, poor and servile,—cares but little for politics; and it is a mercy to rule them wisely and justly. If wages are good, and crops plentiful, the farmer and mechanic are contented, provided the taxes are not high. In a soil which yields so readily and abundantly, and a temperature so genial, men are naturally indolent. It is easier, thus provided with the necessaries of life, to be governed than to govern,—especially, if they do not feel the pressure of the crown, or the blows of the sceptre. They are, therefore, docile, quiet, and ready to pass from one chief to another without inquiry. In addition to this, it should always be remembered, that Mexico is of all civilized countries perhaps the least accessible, both from abroad and in its interior;—its coasts ravaged by dangerous fevers; its territory piled up on an isthmus between two great Continents on the north and south, and two great oceans on the east and west. It may be literally called a nation hanging on the sides of a mountain; the Atlantic thundering at its base on the one side, and the Pacific on the other; without steamers, railways, or means for the easy transmission of papers—by which not only the news of the day and of the whole world may be transmitted to every cabin of its forests; but by which the people themselves may travel, easily and cheaply, and thus become knit together by friendship, kindred, and kindly intercourse. It is an affair of as much importance to make a journey of a hundred miles,* as it was with us during the Revolution; for not only are they obliged to travel in slow coaches, over bad roads on mules and horses, but they must be accompanied by a horde of servants and sumpter animals, a mountain of bedding, baggage and cooking utensils, and, besides, be guarded for fear of the robbers! Thus, while there is no extensive intercommunication, there is less perhaps from abroad; and, of course, the opinions of Europe and America can have but little influence on a nation

* Last year only eleven hundred and nine persons arrived as passengers at Vera Cruz, and four hundred and fifty-nine left that port, so that the average gain of population by emigration, was only six hundred and fourteen through that city.

so imprisoned, both by the nature of its territory, and its own mismanagement.

I have thus spoken of some of the causes of Mexican adversity; let me go further. *It has been a difficult thing to make the Mexicans believe that they possessed any other kind of wealth but money or mines.* It was difficult to make them understand that they were poor, in the midst of gold and silver, and that the wealthiest nations were England and Holland, the one without a precious mine in her soil, the other redeemed from the washes of the sea.

In 1833, they were at the expense of $17,000,000 for their army, and in 1841, of $8,000,000, with only between seven and eight millions of people, and no foreign war; and while they were furnishing from their mines the circulating medium of the world, they thought themselves exceedingly successful, if they could borrow money at an interest of fifty or even sixty per cent.

Again, by the reduction of the export duty, on the precious metals, to three per cent., and the lax administration of the Custom Houses in the year from 1821 to 1822, $66,000,000 passed through the ports *regularly* to foreign nations—besides what was secretly taken from the country—which was thus depleted, in one twelvemonth, of a mass of wealth that would have assured it prosperity for years. The consequence was a paper money system, that soon lost its credit, and produced the most disastrous results.

Again, they allowed no liberty of worship. They forbade foreigners to acquire real estate or freehold interests of any kind;—they clogged their naturalization laws with odious incumbrances to emigrants;—they threw a thousand obstacles in the way of the marriage and even burial of foreigners;—and, as to the "*protection*" afforded by their tribunals, it was too notoriously infamous to be patiently spoken of.

Again, after severe losses by the export of the precious metals, a short-sighted policy was adopted by legislators in regard to commerce. With fair promises and plausible declarations, they professed a spirit of "free trade," while, at the same moment, there was no invention that ingenuity could devise, which they did not throw in the way of merchants. They commenced the prohibitory system. They imposed duties to the amount of double or triple the value of imports, allowing but short indulgence on the bonds; and the result was, that there were no cash sales. This operated as a direct bounty in favor of contraband, not only in the importation of merchandise, but in the export of silver; at the same time that by these high duties the people were indirectly taxed to an exorbitant degree, and the nation was deprived of a large revenue, which she might have derived from moderate levies that would not have tempted to illicit trade.

We are taught to regard this as an era of regeneration in the Government of Mexico.

General Santa Anna was the individual who struck the first blow against the power of Iturbidé, and it is to be hoped that his heart has not grown cold to liberty as it has grown in years.

Now, although it is true that THE PEOPLE are usually but slightly interested in the *pronnnciamentos*, (which are made by regiments or officers of the army,) yet, I believe that the *émeutes* of 1841 were decidedly popular with the masses, and chiefly so, on account of an internal consumption duty, which they found extremely onerous. It must be said, in justice to Bustamante and his cabinet, that they too were opposed to it; but finding Congress resolved to continue its enforcement, they felt bound to sustain the law as long as they were its ministers under a Constitution.

At the outset of his administration, in September, 1841, Santa Anna had the most extraordinary difficulties to contend with. An army of near thirty thousand men was on foot, and to be maintained;—the officers of the Government were extremely numerous, and to be paid;—there were dissensions among his troops, and jealousy of his power;—the whole country was in a political ferment;—the copper currency (the only currency of the masses,) was depreciated more than fifty per cent.;—and, to crown the catalogue of misfortunes, when he entered the Palace there was not a single dollar in the Treasury!

Still, he was unappalled by these amazing difficulties. He supported his army, paid his clerks, quelled all dissensions among the troops and officers, pacified the country, called in the copper coin and issued new, dispersed a Congress whose Constitution he disliked—and, for more than two years, has held the Supreme power of his country in defiance of rebellious chiefs and angry demagogues. Nor were his efforts confined to his domestic relations alone, during this stormy period. By his skill and energy he managed to avert the horrors of a foreign war, and to preserve amicable intercourse with all those powers to whom Mexico bears the relation of a debtor.

Having thus passed the most trying portion of his administration, and established a system of government which can scarcely be called constitutional, it is his first duty to administer that government with a *strong* but patriotic arm. He must insure PEACE to his country at all hazards,—even if that peace be effected by despotism. He must end, for ever, that rebellious spirit in the army, which is so easily excited by every ambitious leader who obtains a momentary influence, and embroils the whole nation in order to elevate him to power.

Foreigners, who are ignorant of the trials and turbulence by which he is surrounded, and the efforts that are often made in Mexico to defeat the most patriotic intentions, may call him a tyrant; but it is, nevertheless, his duty to persevere enduringly until he establishes permanent tranquillity, under which alone his country can advance.

There is one thing which, I confess, I desire particularly to see General Santa Anna effect; and that is, an act for which the reign of Henry VIII. is chiefly commendable. I mean the seizure and distribution of the church property.

It is true, that the President may have yet to fear a power which the brotherhood possess, not only over the common people, but over the very common materials of which the army is composed;—but dangerous diseases require dangerous remedies, and a bold and trustful hand to apply them. Henry VIII. did this in an essentially Catholic country and in a most superstitious age, and it has been recently effected in Spain and Havana. In order to effect this object, successfully, and in the most beneficial manner, not only to the church but to the mass of the people, it would be well for him, in his present increase of the army, to press into the service every idler, vagabond or *lépero*, with whom the city and the suburbs *swarm;* and after due drilling, and accustoming them to military obedience, to colonize these troops in the different parts of the Republic, giving, as bounties for their services, portions of the estates now held by the priesthood, reserving the rest for sale at moderate prices to the Indians who labor for the church. In doing this he would benefit the nation by bringing a large property into the common weal, and by giving employment to thousands, whose utter vagrancy and vagabondism are unparalleled in any other part of the world.

The territory thus acquired, and sold or distributed,—what a picture of dawning civilization would spread over the land! The half-starved slaves of the church, and of the large proprietors, erected suddenly into manliness, would stand up feeling that they were truly human, and a speedy intellectual progress would commence with the acquirement of property.

The increased productions of the soil would naturally require new markets—markets would produce new roads—new means of transportation—new inventions of agricultural implements—new wants in articles of taste, luxury and refinement. Men would begin to travel on the new roads. Mexico would become acquainted with herself. The idle spirit created by lavish productions of the mines, would be aroused from its lethargy. There would be a gradual infusion of foreign blood, making her citizens emulous of other nations; and thus, in a few years, Mexico would behold her own ships bearing abroad her own products—would learn that she had within her soil other sources of wealth besides her ores —would attract back some of the millions she has furnished the world for the last three hundred years, and, in fine, become in every respect independent.

These are beautiful objects to present for a patriot's ambition. If he possesses the power and influence, which I think he does, Santa Anna can effect all this if he lives, for he has talents and energy competent to the task; but if he fails and assumes the Imperial purple, I shall be as mistaken as I shall feel grieved to see so glorious a chance for a splendid immortality lost by a hero.

To the reorganization, then, of his country, Santa Anna will, I believe, apply himself vigorously and he must remember, that although the same spirit of aristocracy; and democracy were at work in the United States immediately after our Revolution, that they had very different materials to operate on. Let him but emulate the example of Washington, whose government, it must be acknowledged, was a strong one, during a long period of his Presidency. 'Our Constitution was then assailed by many perils. The inflammatory appeals of Genet; the bitterness engendered by Jay's treaty; Congress doubtful of its powers; the States mutually distrustful; agriculture and commerce languishing; and an anarchical spirit disseminated through the land!—Yet, above all these discords, rose the calm, patient and patriotic spirit of Washington, triumphant; equally untempted by the blandishments of power, and unquailing before the dangerous assumption of authority. He knew the true interests of the people, and working for them alone, confided to the generous heart of the nation, to interpret his acts aright, when he seemed to trench on the Constitution. He dared to take an unpopular side, and thus checked Genet,—had him recalled, and settled the French interest and interference for ever. He assured peace by the sanction of Jay's treaty—and, as he says himself in one of his letters, "gave our country time to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress, without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes." And yet, throughout this trial, with what malevolent bitterness was he assailed even by the people he had just freed! Painful, indeed, is power, when it has to combat, by virtuous and truly patriotic efforts, the prejudices, errors, and selfishness of the multitude for which it toils!

It was remarked by Mr. Jefferson, in regard to our country, that "more than a generation will be requisite, under the administration of reasonable laws, favoring the progress of knowledge in the general masses of the people, and their habituation to an independent security of person and property, before they will be capable of estimating the value of freedom, and the necessity of a sacred adherence to the principle on which it rests for preservation. Instead of that liberty which takes root and growth in the progress of reason, *if recovered by mere force or accident*, it becomes with an unprepared people—the tyranny, still, of the many—of the few—of the one."*

It may perhaps be improper for me, after so short a residence in the country, to make suggestions as to the mode of its regeneration; but there are many obvious improvements which must strike every one, and which it will not be inappropriate to mention. It seems to me to be absolutely necessary:—

* Letter cxxi.

1st. To establish a constitutional Confederacy.

2nd. To *assure the people of the permanency of that institution, and of pacific self-government.*

3rd. To encourage emigration, holding out inducements to foreigners, either alluring them to acquire freehold property, or such title to real estate, as will confer upon them the unquestionable and undisturbed right to the soil for a considerable length of time.

4th. To alter the tariff, so as to free trade from many of the ridiculous restrictions that impair it, and allow native industry to take its direction from wholesome competition, rather than dangerous legislation.

5th. To establish a universal system of public education.

6th. To make the Press entirely free.

7th. To distribute the church lands among the people, or to put them up at such minimum prices, as will enable all classes to become freeholders.

8th. Gradually to diminish the army, and colonize it.

9th. To destroy the corruption of Government patronage, and purify the Customs.

10th. To restore the mining interests, and reform the mint.

11th. To purify the Judiciary, and cause law to be fairly administered between man and man.

12th. To destroy the contraband trade entirely: and

13th. To permit religious liberty.

Of all these improvements, I regard the encouragement of emigration as the most essential, after the establishment and assurance of peace and religious liberty. Men will not toil to get rich, merely by virtue of acts of Congress. It requires the stimulus of example, and the infusion of a new and energetic blood into the system.

Nor is it to be feared, that the country will be absorbed at once by foreigners and foreign influence. The old staid Spanish prejudice, in favor of its own kindred, must be overcome. French, Irish, Dutch, Germans, Spaniards, Italians, Russians, Hebrews, Greeks, Norwegians, Swedes,—all find representatives in *our* population, harmoniously acting together for their personal advantages and the prosperity of the common weal.

Many years will be required to produce adequate confidence in Europeans and North Americans, to induce them to emigrate to Mexico for the purpose of settlement. They have had too hard a lesson in the past, to allow them to plunge into Mexican trade and territory again, notwithstanding the temptation of the country. Emigration will be by gradual and kindly progress, and I question much whether the feelings or the language of the nation will be changed. It will be a melioration of lot, without an alteration of nature; and thus, without any violent disturbance of the tastes, sympathies, or prejudices of the old, a new race will grow up with the renewed country, regenerated by the graft of foreign stamina and talent.

Mexico, must not, however, flatter herself, that the world is humbly on its knees seeking admittance at her portal. Not so. She has too long exhibited the picture of an ill-regulated and quarrelsome household to tempt mankind to become her inmates, notwithstanding the allurements of her beauty. I do not believe that she will ever advance to any degree of greatness, without foreign emigration to her shores; yet, in order to attract an influx of artisans and laborers, ripe from the improved fields and the skillful workshops of the rest of the world, she must prove herself worthy of their advent by the peaceful and prosperous future she promises to secure them.

If Mexico, however, sees fit to pursue a narrow system of exclusion, akin to that under which she suffered while a colony of Spain, I confess that I behold but little prospect for her future. She will want the illustration of example—the virtue of emulation. As long as Santa Anna remains at the head of affairs, and is able to retain control over the army by pay or by its attachment to his person,—so long will that remarkable genius continue to preserve tranquillity. But it may be the peace of dread,—the subordination of fear,—the muteness of slavery. If, in the meantime, he chooses to bring the people gradually to a knowledge of their rights and a habit of self-government, while he destroys, for ever, the disturbers of their peace,—he will deserve a high place in the story of this Continent's progress.

But if, on the other hand, he is seduced by the possession of power or only continues to hold it for despotism and plunder;—if the result of his administration is unsuccessful, and those who came into authority under solemn pledges to purify the Government shall prove false to their trust;—if such are to be the only results of so much tumult and warfare, the downfall of Mexico is, indeed, close at hand!

The clouds of rebellion which have so long lowered over the country, will descend in showers of blood,—and a war of retribution, or, of castes, as in Guatemala, must end the circle, and give up again the fair territory of Mexico to the forests and its beasts or to be the spoil of some foreign invader.

In every event, her fate must be most interesting to the people of the United States. If peace, and its train of attendant results, are to bless her with success and happiness, our stake and sympathy with her republican system must be great and enduring. If anarchy, and dismemberment of her States ensue, we will be burdened with a dangerous neighbor and annoying enemy. But if *foreign occupation* be attempted, the bloody war that must ensue, will only be ended by the expulsion of the intruder, and the reëstablishment of republicanism on this Continent.

CONCLUSION.

ON the 9th of November, 1842, I left the Capital in the diligence, accompanied by Mr. Peyton Southall bearing dispatches to our Government. We had secured the attendance of a strong guard, and found three or four Englishmen in the coach as well accoutred as ourselves.

I was greatly struck with the change that had been effected in everything during the last year. The road was in excellent order;—the ruts in the mountain sides had been filled and levelled;—the inns were refitted and neatly kept;—the villages along the way-side had been cleaned and painted, and scarcely a vestige remained of the misery and desolation that oppressed me on my arrival.

On the 11th, at sunset, we passed through Plan del Rio,—supped at Puente Nacional,—and, at daylight on the 12th, (precisely a year from the date of my arrival,) again reached "La Villa rica de la Vera Cruz."

After a delay of a day or two we embarked on board the U. S. Steamer Missouri. On the 20th, we reached the southwest pass of the Mississippi, and once more hailed with pleasure our native shores.

I only repeat the sentiment of almost every traveller in the beautiful country I have been describing, when I say,—that no matter how impatient we may be to leave Mexico, yet, when her frontier has been passed, perhaps for ever, there are few who do not long to enjoy once more her cloudless skies, her bountiful soil, and her eternal spring!

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

A SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER ON THE SANDWICH ISLANDS, THE CALIFORNIAS, AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IN REGARD TO THE ENCROACHMENTS OF ENGLAND.

If there is anything that peculiarly distinguishes the statesmanship of England, it is the prospective wisdom with which its Ministers (while guarding the momentary interests at home,) seek new vents for the labor of its population and for the surplus of that population, also, when it becomes too crowded within the limits of the British Islands. It is the want of this vigilant policy that peculiarly characterizes our own country. In the midst of a vast territory, with ample room for the expansion of our inhabitants for hundreds of years, we are careless of the future, and we do not look with wariness to those geographical points of vantage around the earth of which England is gradually possessing herself, for the extension and guardianship of her commercial interests. We thus permit a grasping and ambitious rival to monopolize positions which, if they do not directly affect the people of our own generation, cannot fail, especially in the event of war, to injure and annoy our posterity.

We have seen Great Britain add Affghanistan, Scinde, and the Chinese Empire, to her control within the last two years; at the same time fixing her power steadily in Canada, by the suppression of every symptom of rebellious spirit. We have seen her firmly planted within her fortresses at Bermuda, establishing herself at the Balize, and encroaching on Guatemala; we have seen her holding the key of the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and the power of the Straits at Malta and the Ionian Isles; we find her in the southern Atlantic, at St. Helena, and in the Indian Seas at numberless islands; and we learn that she at last pounced, without warning, on the Hawaiian group, with the same spirit that animated her conquests in China, (although she has since officially disavowed the acts of her officer.) Britain has thus encircled the globe with her power, and in this greedy acquisition of territory, and prudent husbandry of resources, our Statesmen should at least perceive a warning of danger from a bold and ambitious rival, if they do not learn a lesson which, under similar circumstances, they would be studious to emulate.

The temper of our Republic is entirely too much devoted to the interests of the passing day. We writhe under debt, and we rush into repudiation. We suffer under financial distress, and we adopt some palliative expedient that saves us from momentary ruin. We dislike the policy of the hour, and we attribute it exclusively to Executive misrule; and the continual distractions of the whole scheme of our popular government seem but to nourish an unceasing nervousness as to who is to rule, and who to control the national patronage. This spirit is creating a vacillating system, which, in the end, must become nationally characteristic. If

persisted in, it will destroy all stability of purpose and extended aim of statesmanship; and, while it generates a class who are willing to become pliant tools of power in return for official emolument, it will ultimately affect the hopes and the enterprise of all those industrious citizens who are willing to labor and amass wealth by a slow, but safe course of national policy, wisely adopted and steadily pursued.

It was not my purpose, however, to address you a homily on national politics when I commenced this letter; but I thought these remarks altogether proper, as introductory to some account of the character, situation, and resources of the Hawaiian Islands and the Californias, in connection with the observations I design making upon our wide-spread interests in the Pacific, the Indian Seas, and the Western Coast of the Americas, and the encroachments of England.

I will proceed, then, without further preface, to offer some notices of the Sandwich Islands, and afterward of the Californias, showing their great importance, at least, to the trade of our country.

The eight Hawaiian Islands form a volcanic group in the Pacific, lying between 18° 50′ and 22° 20′ N. latitude, and 154° 53′ and 160° 15′ W. longitude, embracing a surface of rather more than six thousand square miles, of which the Island of Hawaii contains about four thousand. The whole population is estimated at one hundred and nine thousand, and although the soil is in many places not of a kindly character, and better adapted to grazing than agriculture, yet, in the upland valleys, there are extensive patches of rich land that may be easily cultivated, and capable of producing two crops of wheat annually. This, however, is all the better for the natives, as the comparative poverty of the earth requires the constant care of the laborer, and is, therefore, more likely to create an industrious class than in more prolific climates.

On the low grounds, coffee, sugar, tobacco, cotton, mulberry and cocoa, may be readily produced; and to these may be added, yams, potatoes, cocoanuts, *bread-fruit*, arrow-root, the *kalo*, or *aurum esculentum;* and among fruits, the strawberry, raspberry, *ohelo*, melons, chirimoyas, limes, oranges, guyavas, pine-apples, grapes, peaches, figs, citrons, tamarinds and *kalo*. Oil may be easily extracted from the nut of the kukui tree.

In former times, one of the chief productions of these Islands was sandal-wood, with which the forests abounded. In the year ending in March, 1832, three hundred and ninety-five tuns of this article, valued at seventy-four thousand four hundred and seventy-one dollars, were imported into China from various places. In 1816 it was the chief source of revenue, and became, also, the chief source of the demoralization of this group. In that year, four hundred thousand dollars worth was exported to the Indies, where it was used by the Hindoos in their religious ceremonials, and by the Chinese in various manufactures of articles of luxury and taste. So great, however, was the demand, and so easily satisfied in the forests of the Sandwich Islands, that the natives were tempted by a ready sale to destroy almost every tree; until, under a wiser administration of their interests, they entirely forbade the cutting of the timber. The wood is represented as again beginning to flourish; so that, in the course of a few years, it will be made once more a source of fruitful revenue.

Besides the sandal-wood, a number of other richly-veined woods are found, and are said to be as valuable for articles of furniture, as *the choicest products of the Brazilian forests.*

Game, poultry, wild goats and hogs, fish and wild fowl, are to be had in abundance; and, although horses have been brought in numbers from the West Coast, yet they always command a high price and are greatly valued. There are no serpents, and but few insects; and, while in the interior any temperature may be gained by gradual elevation, even to constant snow;—on the coast the thermometer averages about 79° Fahrenheit, and the climate is so salubrious, equal and mild, that, in the native language, "*there is no word to express the general idea of weather.*"

The chief harbor is at Honolulu; and the following Table will afford you some idea of the extent of the commerce of the Island previous to 1832. In 1823, from forty to sixty whalers, mostly American, were to be seen in the Isles at one time; and the trade in sandal-wood was carried on briskly.

STATEMENT

Of the number of ships that touched at Woahoo, one of the Sandwich Islands, during the eight years ending with 1831, distinguishing between English and American, and between Whale and Merchant ships.

ENGLISH.

Years.	Whalers.		Merchant.		Total.	
	Ships.	Tuns.	Ships.	Tuns.	Ships.	Tuns.
1824	15	5,798	2	500	17	6,298
1825	18	7,765	2	400	20	8,165
1826	11	4,854	2	410	13	5,264
1827	16	6,505	2	334	18	6,839
1828	26	9,772	5	391	31	10,663
1829	21	8,172	6	1,199	27	9,371
1830	16	6,982	10	1,693	26	8,675
1831	23	8,567	7	1,292	30	9,859
			AMERICAN.			
1824	50	15,688	16	3,163	66	18,851
1825	37	11,539	19	4,077	56	15,616
1826	67	21,892	21	3,996	88	25,888
1827	66	21,261	16	3,693	82	24,954
1828	90	31,188	26	5,841	116	37,029
1829	87	31,087	21	5,210	108	36,297
1830	77	26,860	23	4,072	100	30,932
1831	58	21,560	25	5,488	83	26,148

UNDER OTHER FOREIGN FLAGS.

	Ships.	Tuns.	Ships.	Total. Tuns.
1824	5	1,330	88	26,479
1825	3	950	79	24,731
1826	6	1,112	107	32,264
1827	7	1,721	107	33,514
1828	8	2,313	155	50,005
1829	4	1,003	139	46,671
1830	3	512	129	40,122
1831	5	1,172	118	37,179

From 1836 to 1841, not less than three hundred and fifty-eight vessels belonging to the United States, chiefly whalers, arrived at Honolulu, each of them expending, on an average, from six hundred to seven hundred dollars. During

the same period, seventeen vessels of war of our country also visited the Islands, and in this number is included the Exploring Expedition, which made extensive observations in Science and Natural History among the group.

In the same five years there were only eighty-two English vessels, also mostly whalers, and nine men of war; seven French merchantmen, and five men of war; and a few scattering vessels from Mexico, Chili, Tahiti, Sydney, China, Russia and Prussia. At the port of Lahaina, the average annual number of *our* whalers is from thirty to fifty, and from twelve to twenty in the rest of the ports.

The Imports for four and a half years previous to the 12th of September, 1840, are stated in "The Polynesian", to have been $1,567,000, of which $742,000 were from the United States.

The Exports for the same period were $1,388,100, of which $65,000 were in sandal-wood, $59,500 in hides, and the balance in goat-skins, salt, and sugar. During the same time ten vessels were owned by residents, of which seven were the property of our citizens, and three of Englishmen.

I have derived from Mr. Jarves's excellent work on these Islands, published last February, in Boston, the substance of the following statistics:

He estimates the value of American property touching annually at Honolulu, including the outfits of whalers, at the lowest possible calculation, to be $1,200,000. If to this be added the cargoes of oil, &c., the amount would unquestionably be swelled to at least $4,000,000. More than two thousand seamen navigate our vessels, exclusive of those employed on board of our national ships, and to the above sums we should join the value of the latter vessels, when estimating the American property which owes its security and protection to the harbors of these Islands. The value of the property of other nations is of course in proportion to their shipping; but it may safely be stated, that the interests of the United States are four times greater than those of England, and that the importations are in the same ratio.

IMPORTS FROM 1836 TO 1841.

From the United States,	$935,000
" England,	127,600
" California,	282,700
" China,	233,990
" Mexico, (specie and bullion,)	167,600
" Chili,	160,000
" Various countries,	127,300
	$2,034,190

EXPORTS DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

Sandal-wood,	$65,000
Hides,	90,000
Goat-skins	27,240
Sugar,	34,000
Molasses,	17,130
Arrow-root,	5,820
Salt,	20,000
Sperm-oil, (vessels from Honolulu)	13,900
Sundries, supplies to shipping, &c.,	275,000
	$548,000

It must be recollected, that large amounts of the imports were purchased for reshipment, from this central position, or *entre-depot*, to California, the Russian settlements, and the Southern Islands.

There are sixty families of Americans, including the missions, on the Islands, and about an equal number formed by intermarriage with the natives. The Americans exceed, by several hundreds, all other foreigners, the most numerous of whom are English and Chinese. The *cost* valuation of our citizens' property, in buildings, furniture, &c., cannot be less than one hundred thousand dollars; while the whole amount invested in permanent improvements, agriculture, vessels, and stock in trade, is certainly over one million. In 1836, it was rated at but four hundred thousand dollars, and the property of other foreigners at one-fifth.

When the first missionaries arrived in these Islands, in 1820, they found an idle, vicious, profligate population; a nation given up to sensuality, lying, drunkenness, riot, treachery, lewdness, and murder; men with whom retaliation signified justice, and who retained, amid their moral ruin, but a single virtue, and that one the stoic power of endurance, derived from listlessness and an utter disregard of life.

But under the management of the judicious persons who were sent out to these Islands, the whole aspect of affairs has been changed. Amid the taunts of careless visitors, and the immoral interference of many whose pride it should have been to rebuke a spirit of disorder, and to encourage the missionaries in their noble labors, they have persevered in the foundation of a Christian Church, and the formation of a Government, which, "if left to itself, and treated by other nations with justice and courtesy, is fully competent to discharge all its relations, not only for the maintenance of its own internal peace, and the security of person and property to all who visit its shores, but to conform to all the settled principles of international law."

The missionaries have overcome a multitude of difficulties. They have almost blotted out the vices that characterized the Islands, at their advent. They found intoxicating liquors forced on the natives by the French Government, through the hostile intervention of its navy, and they put down intemperance by the moral power of societies. They met the introduction of a different sect by additional zeal. They found a people grossly ignorant, and they taught them the wisdom of other nations. They found a band of savages, with a rich soil, fierce tempers, and abandoned habits; and they have, while civilizing the people and bringing them into the folds of Christianity, taught them the value of their lands, the dignity and usefulness of commerce and labor, and the excellence of virtue. After twenty years of missionary labor, one of these gentlemen was called on to deliver a course of lectures on political science, and the result was a Constitution and a Code of Laws—regulating every department of an organized Government on a plan as near as wisdom would allow the adoption of our system among a people emerging into civilization. Two extensive editions of the Bible have been distributed over the Islands; more than seventeen thousand Protestants gather in the churches, and eighteen thousand children are educated in the schools!

Thus silently, and almost unknown to us, away in those distant seas, has a nation been called into existence by a few Christian teachers, without arms, and by moral influences alone. Barbarous idolatry, and brutal sensuality, have been abandoned, and Christianity and civilization have taken their places. The commercial advantages of the Islands have, at the same time, attracted the attention

of our enterprising people, and while they have formed the chief resort of our whalers and our navy in the Pacific, they have ministered to a trade more extensive on our part than on that of any other nation.

THE CALIFORNIAS.

In the preceding part of this letter, I gave you some account of the Sandwich Islands, their trade and importance to our Union; and I will now proceed to present some notices of the Californias, with the view of drawing your attention to certain conclusions to which I have come, in regard to American interests in the Pacific.

Lower California, although discovered in 1534 by Grijalva, was almost unknown for more than a hundred years, when the first Jesuit missionaries commenced their labors in the year 1683. Salvatierra, Ugarte and Piccoli, with the Virgin for their patron, attempted the conquest with arms, and by moral influences; and although in 1786 fifteen missionary establishments had been made, yet the whole of the peninsula seems to have turned out barren and valueless to trade, except so far as the Pearl-fishery produced a very considerable revenue. In 1587, according to Acosta, six hundred and ninety-seven pounds of this precious article were imported into Seville; but in 1831, (the latest account I can find of any authority,) the whole fishery had dwindled into utter insignificance. There were then but *four* vessels and *two* boats engaged in it; and the two hundred divers who manned them, obtained, in all, but eighty-eight ounces of pearls, valued at little more than thirteen thousand dollars.

Upper California, however, is different in its natural characteristics. No great impression was made on it by the missionaries in their "spiritual conquest" until 1768. Since then it has gradually progressed, (under the influence, I believe, of the Franciscan monks,) until *twenty-one* missions are numbered within its limits, and twenty-three thousand and twenty-five Indians, troops and *Creoles*, have come within their dominion, of which number only about five thousand are of Spanish extraction. Each of these missions has a tract assigned to it of fifteen miles square; and the Indian population, gathered from the neighboring wandering tribes, is placed within its boundaries, under vigilant surveillance; worked, fed, clothed, taught the Christian doctrine, and subjected (according to Forbes,) to an absolute slavery. They are idle, stupid, pusillanimous, sickly, and have made no progress, either in the arts necessary for personal comfort or of national government.

The portion of Upper California, at present occupied by settlers and missions, is about five hundred English miles in extent, and runs, in breadth, from the sea to the first ranges of hills on the west. The area of this occupied land is about thirteen millions of acres, forming but an insignificant portion of the whole territory, which, in "superficial extent, is equal to many of the most extensive kingdoms of Europe." Beyond the western hills, about forty miles from the sea, the country is a wilderness, held by scattered tribes, but little known and seldom visited.

But all the explorers who have visited California, describe it as a magnificent country. The territory behind the highlands is "reckoned superior to the coast, and is said to consist of plains, lakes, and hills, beautifully diversified, and of the greatest natural fertility; capable of yielding every variety of vegetable

production, and abounding with timber of the greatest size." The mean temperature of San Francisco in December is 53°, the maximum being 66° and the minimum 46, while the hygrometer is said to indicate a remarkably dry atmosphere.

In different districts, the country is varied by hill and dell, and by occasional mountains rising to the height of a thousand, and sometimes three thousand feet, while the adjacent soil is of the richest loam. A river has been traced some hundreds of miles upward, toward the northeast, from the bay of San Francisco. From Monterey to Santa Clara, the scenery "may be compared to a park which had been planted with the true old English oak, with its undergrowth cut away, and the stately lords of the forest left in complete possession of the soil, which was covered with luxuriant herbage, and beautifully diversified with pleasing eminences and vales."

In the garden of the Mission of Buenaventura, Vancouver was struck with the quantity and variety of the productions, not only indigenous to the country, but "appertaining to the temperate as well as to the torrid zone;—such as apples, pears, plums, figs, oranges, grapes, peaches, pomegranates, plantains, bananas, cocoanuts, sugar cane, indigo, and every useful variety of kitchen plants and medicinal roots." "It would not be easy," says Forbes,* "to match such an assemblage as this elsewhere, and yet this is only a part of the fruits and vegetables now cultivated in California."

The forests are thick and abundant, filled with oaks, elms, birch, planes, and great varieties of pines; and the ranges of hills and mountains which bound the maritime portions to the northeast, shelter it from the only winds that might injure the fruits of the soil, and tend to preserve the eternal spring that seems to reign for ever over this favored land.

Immense herds of horses run wild in California; and it is said that, in some places, the horned cattle even render the country unsafe for passengers. Deer, a variety of birds, and exhaustless quantities of fish, are also found; but I will better convey to you an idea of the productions of the country by transcribing some of the tables given by Mr. Forbes, whose long residence on the Western Coasts of America, entitles him to the greatest confidence and respect. Agriculture in general, is but poorly conducted, the implements being nearly the same as those that were brought by the earliest settlers; and the grains that are cultivated are only wheat, barley, maize, and frijoles, or, a bean used as the favorite food by all the natives.

The following is the whole produce on the portion of Upper California, which was cultivated in 1831:

Wheat,	25,144
Maize, or corn,	10,926
Frijoles,	1,644
Gervanzos and peas,	1,083
Barley,	7,405
	46,202—*fanegas.*

The wheat and barley may be calculated to be worth $2 the *fanega;* the maize $1,50; and the *fanega*, itself, to contain about two bushels and a half English

* In his work on California.

measure. The wheat, it will be perceived, is greater than any of the other grains; and this is the reverse of what usually occurs throughout the rest of Mexico.*

The mills for grinding flour are few and primitive; and although, as we have seen, all sorts of vegetables and fruits, from the potatoe to the vine, fig and pines, may be readily cultivated; and although the same extent of ground will produce about three times as much wheat as England, and returns maize one hundred and fifty fold; yet every species of agriculture seems to be abandoned that is not merely and absolutely necessary to support existence. Pasturage here, as well as throughout most of the Spanish settlements, appears to be the great object of the farmer; and he derives his profits from it in the easiest manner, by the sale either of his beeves and horses, or of their fat and hides.

The following table will give you the total number of cattle, of all descriptions, for the year 1831:†

Black cattle,	216,727
Horses,	32,201
Mules,	2,844
Asses,	177
Sheep,	153,455
Goats,	1,873
Swine,	839

In addition to these, there are numbers at large which are not marked as belonging to any of the jurisdictions, missions, haciendas or towns; and are hunted, *lassoed* and slain, to prevent their interference with the pasturage of the more useful cattle. But from all this vast multitude but little advantage is gained, except in the hides and tallow. Butter and cheese are almost unknown, and the dairy consequently altogether neglected. A fat ox is worth $5; a cow $5; a horse, for the saddle, $10; a mare $5; a sheep $2, and a mule is worth $10.

In former times, it was not unusual to find a thousand head of cattle driven to the city of Mexico from the large estates on the Pacific; and although the practice is still continued, yet it is not to the extent as formerly. During the first few years after the opening of the ports, the trade with California was but trifling. The amount of exports was then estimated, at about thirty thousand hides and seven thousand quintals of tallow, with some trifling cargoes to San Blas, being not more than $130,000 in total value; but within a few years past the trade has considerably increased, and a brisk intercourse has been conducted, almost entirely by Americans, with the Sandwich Islands. There is but small internal commerce, and although it forms part of the Mexican Republic, it is almost entirely cut off and isolated from the great mass of the nation.

Besides a genial climate, and an exceedingly prolific soil, Upper California has several of the best harbors on the Western Coast of America.

Monterey, which was recently taken possession of by Commodore JONES, in the most impromptu manner, is tolerably safe, though but an open roadstead. San Diego has a good and secure anchorage. San Pedro is an extensive bay, with good holding ground, but almost totally unknown. San Juan has an anchorage of five fathoms throughout the bay, and San Francisco, (a narrow arm of the sea, *penetrating far inland, by a safe and deep channel,) forms one of the most capacious and secure harbors in the world. It is perfectly shielded from every wind, and the largest frigates may ride in safety on its bosom.*

* Forbes, 220. † Forbes, 225.

It is useless to contrast the trifling result produced by the missionaries in California after a century's labors, with that of the missionaries in the Sandwich Islands, after but twenty-five years. Yet we cannot help noticing that, while in the Islands there are seventeen thousand persons in the church, and eighteen thousand in the schools, the total number of reclaimed Indians in California is not more than eighteen thousand six hundred and eighty-three, and those, even, are generally unable to read;—without books, bibles, or paper, and altogether incapable of self-government. The ministers of both creeds have, doubtless, been zealous in spirit, but certainly with very unequal success.

You may now very reasonably ask me, (after having perused all these details,) of what interest are they, either to yourself or our country? and why I should direct your attention to a portion of the territory of a neighboring power with which we are at peace, and likely to remain so?

I trust sincerely that these pacific relations may long continue. It is the interest of both Powers that they should do so, and especially that of Mexico. An ardent friendship between us, founded on mutual faith and similar republican institutions, cannot fail to affect the destinies of this Continent; and I trust you will not imagine, therefore, that I am pointing out the treasures of the Californias for the purpose of alluring people to the enterprise of another Texas. But the condition of Mexico is extremely unsettled. It is impossible to declare or imagine what will be the ultimate issue of the continual revolutions, that have torn the vitals of that beautiful country for twenty years. She may consolidate her provinces, she may adopt a Federal Government, or she may dismember her Empire, each State setting up a separate and independent rule for herself; but, in any event, it is proper that we should not so cautiously watch her, as watch Great Britain in regard to her. Mexico partakes in the Spanish pride of territorial dominion and retention of her soil; but she is in extreme difficulties. She owes (we have seen,) a debt of $60,000,000 to England; and to the United States a debt of more than $2,000,000. Her maritime revenues are mortgaged for an internal debt of $18,-550,000; and, in all, she owes nearly eighty-five millions, England being always the largest creditor, to the extent, perhaps, of three-fourths of the whole.

How is she to pay England? To liquidate a portion of the debt and interest due the United States, (of little more than $200,000,) she was obliged to resort to a forced loan from her citizens, as you have recently observed. Suppose that a dismemberment takes place, or, that England, after accumulating her claims and wrath, until she thinks the amount and energy sufficient for all exigencies, suddenly orders her Minister in Mexico to demand payment or his passports—what must inevitably be the result? I will tell you in the language of Forbes, in order to show that this is no vain imagination of the moment excited in an American fancy. The value of California is known and appreciated in England.

"California," says our author, at page 146,* "is quite a distinct country from Mexico, and has nothing in common with it, except that the present inhabitants are of the same family; it is therefore to be apprehended, that on any cause of quarrel between the two countries, it will be apt to separate itself from the parent State."

This shows you the possibility of a disunion, without any very violent effort or loss on either side; but, at page 152, he boldly broaches the idea of cancelling the English debt, by a transfer of California to her creditors. "This," says he, "would be a wise measure on the part of Mexico, if the Government could be

* Forbes's California, London, 1839. Mr. Forbes is, or was, until recently, British Consul in one of the ports on the West Coast of Mexico.

brought to lay aside the vanity of retaining large possessions. The cession of such a disjointed part of the Republic as California, would be an advantage. In no case can it ever be profitable to the Mexican Republic, nor can it possibly remain united to it for any length of time. Therefore, by giving up this territory for the debt, would be getting rid of this last for nothing. * * * *
If California were ceded for the English debt, the creditors might be formed into a Company, with the difference, that they should have a sort of sovereignty over the territory—somewhat in the manner of the East India Company. This, in my opinion, would certainly bring a revenue in time which might be equal to the debt; and, under good management and with an English population, would most certainly realize all that has been predicted of this fine country."

Now, may not this sudden usurpation of the Sandwich Islands be a premonitory symptom—a step in advance to a movement upon Mexico? Look, for a moment, at the map of the world. England already has control of the Eastern part of Asia; is looking toward her possessions of the Hudson Bay Company, and is evidently excited by our Senatorial harangues on the Oregon Territory. Her rival, Russia, has encroached on the Californias by a settlement at Bodega, and is known to have attempted to procure the cession of an upland tract in the Hawaiian Islands, under the pretence of a desire "for soil to cultivate wheat." France has the Marquesas. We are prosecuting our claims on the North Western Territory. England requires a central rendezvous for her fleets in the Pacific, and she seizes the Sandwich Islands. They are in the direct line of trade from the West Coast to China. Mexico owes Great Britain an enormous debt which she is unable to pay. A project is on foot to cross the Isthmus of Panama by a railway or canal. Steam navigation has already been introduced into the Pacific, and we all know how rapidly the facilities were advanced within a few years to reach India through the Red Sea.

Now I confess to you, that, combining all these circumstances—the value of the Islands and the Main, the greediness of England, the manner in which she is pushing her Empire all over the world—I cannot but see danger in the sudden attempted seizure of the Hawaiian group, and think it time that the statesmen of our country should take a decided stand in the politics of this hemisphere.

I think I have shown the importance of these Islands to our commerce, and the value of the Californias, both as a country of vast natural resources, and as a territory which, in the hands of a European Power, would become a central point, whence it might powerfully influence the future destinies of this Continent.

"The Pacific Coast of Spanish America," says the author I have already quoted, "is, in uninterrupted extent, equal to the whole coast of the Old World from the Naze of Norway to the Cape de Verd in Africa. What reflections must this give rise to, when we consider that this line of coast comprehends Denmark, Germany, Holland, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the countries around the Mediterranean, and part of Africa? And certainly the American shores are bounded by countries, naturally more rich than all these ancient and powerful countries united."

It seems, then, that the true wisdom of our Government should be directed toward the preservation of this immense territory intact, and under the growing influence of Republican systems. A wrong step in statesmanship in our day and generation, may involve us in all the foreign difficulties and questions of the "balance of power," and affect the fate of our hemisphere for centuries to come. But, under any circumstances, let it be our care to keep sacred the soil of our

immediate neighbor in the hour of her weakness, and to protect the Islands that have been founded and raised to national dignity and importance, by American zeal and American enterprise. It is our pecuniary and our political interest to do so.

THE ENCROACHMENTS OF ENGLAND.

No one who has been in the least attentive to the diplomatic negotiations of our country, can fail to know, that the question of total political separation between this Continent and Europe, is one of no recent date.

When the revolutions of the Southern Republics were in some degree quieted, and it became evident, after the battle of Ayacucho, that the dominion of Spain must cease entirely over her American colonies, the Government of the United States hastened to interfere, by her ministers abroad, in behalf of the independence of the revolted provinces. It did so, in order to prevent the useless effusion of blood, and to produce a pacification of this hemisphere, under which the commercial interests of our Union might be fostered, and the people of the newly emancipated regions take their place among the enlightened nations of the world. In these negotiations with the European powers, both Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay produced some of the ablest state papers that adorn the archives of our Department; and it would be well to refer to them, at the present period, when the encroachments of England, on the flimsiest pretexts, are again beginning to be visible all over the world, while she is extending her sway, not only for the peaceful purposes of her commerce, but for empire and territory. The foundation of the *exclusive* system of our country, has been laid "in principles of morals and politics new and distasteful to the thrones and dominations of the Old World;" and they are now, most probably, seeking with slow and secret advance, to regain, by gradual and unheeded progress, what the political ferments of Europe, at an earlier period, forced them to abandon.

In the summer of 1825, a large French fleet visited the American seas and the coast of the United States. The purpose of this armament was unknown. But the watchful statesmen of those days regarded a visit of that character with jealous eyes; and the Minister of the United States at the Court of Paris was immediately directed by Mr. Clay, to inform the Cabinet to which he was accredited, that any such movements, made in time of peace, ought hereafter to be notified to us. Mr. Brown was instructed, at the same time, to call the attention of the French Government to the condition of the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico; and it was distinctly intimated, that inasmuch as we were altogether contented with the present ownership of these possessions, "we could not consent to their occupation by another European power than Spain, under any contingency whatever." A similar communication was made about the same time to Mr. Canning; and it is known that these frank and amicable representations were heedfully respected by the Governments both of England and France. The real purposes of the French fleet of 1825 are still utterly unknown; but the idea that its object was the occupation of Cuba and Porto Rico gained considerable ground, from the current rumor of the day, the weakness of Spain, the revolted condition of her provinces, the intimate alliance between that monarchy and France, and "the disproportionate extent of the armament to any *ordinary* purposes of peaceful commerce."

It is also known, from the interviews between Mr. Middleton and Count Nesselrode, at St. Peterburg, in August, 1825, that the Russian Cabinet had resolved to discountenance every enterprise against these Islands, and thus maintain the only state of things "that could preserve a just balance of power in the Antilles."

President MONROE, in his message to Congress in 1823, most distinctly lays down his ideas of the true policy of the United States in regard to this Continent.

"The citizens of the United States," said he, "cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow men on that (the European) side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European Powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded, or seriously menaced, that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defence. With the movements in this hemisphere, we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the Allied Powers, is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments. And to the defence of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations subsisting between the United States and those Powers, to declare, that we should consider any attempt on their part, to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety.

"With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power, we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their Independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition, for the purposes of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European Power, in other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain, we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur, which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security."

In March, 1826, Mr. ADAMS, then President of the United States, prepared a very luminous message on the subject of the Panama mission, in which he takes occasion to give a historical account of our relations with the new Republics, and to enforce the doctrines so clearly stated by his predecessor. He deemed the acceptance of an invitation to join in the deliberation of that Congress, as by no means violating the ancient well established policy of our nation by entangling us in dangerous alliances, and he resolved that we should concur in no engagements which would import hostility to Europe, or justly excite resentment in any of her States. "Our views," says he, "would extend no further than to a mutual pledge of the parties to the compact, to maintain the principle in application to its own territory, and to permit no colonial lodgments, or establishments, of European jurisdiction upon its own soil.

It will be perceived, therefore, that two Administrations at the commencement of the national existence of the new Republic, solemnly determined on an unqualified political and colonial separation from all European powers. They were anxious to preserve a state of mutual liberty and independence, and yet it was not deemed expedient to imitate the example of the Old World, by the formation of an American Holy Alliance, in defence of our freedom, as Europe had done in defence of legitimacy and allegiance. It, nevertheless, would seem, that as the great head of the Powers of this Continent, it becomes us *now* to persist in the policy wisely adopted near twenty years ago; and to be warned, in time, of every symptom of approaching danger.

If England extends her power, by gradual advances, from the Balize into Guatemala, (now under Indian rule,) and then into Yucatan, (now in revolt,) she will hold the key of both Americas, by controlling the passage across the Isthmus to the Pacific. If she pushes her claims on Mexico, and grasps the Californias; retains her hold on China, the mouth of the Columbia and Canada;—and, while she continues the possession of the Bermudas, sweeps our Eastern coast by armed war-steamers, masked under the peaceful disguise of West India Mail Packets(!) we will shortly find ourselves as comfortably and securely walled in by British bayonets, as the most loyal of Her Majesty's subjects could well desire.

And yet, all this would be effected by mere supineness on our part, and by neglect of determined firmness, and intimations similar to those of 1825, in regard to the French fleet, and the occupation of Cuba and Porto Rico. If I am answered, that these are dreams and visions of things that *may* occur, but perhaps will not in our day and generation; I reply, by the expression of a hope that the period of time-serving policy is over in our Union, and that the statesmanship of America is not hereafter to be confined by a horizon of four years, or, at most of *eight*.

If one-half the foresight that is employed in Britain to sustain a population over-taxed, over-worked, and surrounded by institutions far behind the spirit of the age, on a territory of small dimensions, were infused, especially, into the foreign relations of our own country, with its vast domain and happy people, the germ of a thousand ills would be destroyed for the future. If we *begin right* in our national career, we shall not be forced to remedy an accumulation of political errors by subsequent legislation, or, like England, to resort to unnatural stimulants and predatory wars for the purpose of infusing artificial life into a decrepit Empire.

In connection with the subject of our trade and interests in the Pacific, and the proposed junction of the Atlantic and that Ocean by a Canal across the Isthmus of Panama, I take the liberty to insert a very valuable note from Mr. Forbes's "California," relative to Steam Navigation in that Sea.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON THE SUBJECT OF STEAM NAVIGATION IN THE PACIFIC, FROM A GENTLEMAN FORMERLY RESIDENT IN ONE OF THE MEXICAN PORTS ON THE PACIFIC.

LONDON, Dec. 20, 1838.

I have taken some pains to make myself acquainted with the grounds on which the "Pacific Steam Navigation Company" is founded, with its proceedings as far

as they have gone, and its prospects as far as I can comprehend them. Of this you may rest assured: that it has already received the patronage of the leading merchants trading to the Pacific; several of them having subscribed with the expressed object of forwarding an undertaking fraught with so many *public* benefits, while others have entered more largely into it, with the view of participating in the great profit which it promises as an investment. The *general result* given in the 34th page of Mr. Wheelwright's pamphlet, showing 466,950 dollars as the amount of annual receipts on four steamers, costing from 400,000 to 450,000 dollars, and against the same only 236,630 dollars of annual expenditure, whereby the company will realize an annual profit of 230,320 dollars, or (at 48d. exchange) £46,064, is so extraordinarily large, that my first impression was to look upon the project as one hatched by parties connected with our Stock Exchange; but on turning to schedules A. and C., I not only found that the above results were verified by a committee of British merchants residing in Lima, and presided over by Her Majesty's Consul for Peru, but that a note was added, giving reasons to hope for still larger profits, under economical arrangements in the management of the items of expenditure.

It appears that this plan, speculative though it seems, dates its rise from the circular officially issued by Her Majesty's Consul General for Peru, dated Lima, 18th June, 1826, directed to British merchants and residents generally, requesting their attention to dispatches from Her Majesty's Government, promising facilities to carry it into effect, and requesting their active coöperation. No undertaking, therefore, could originate under more respectable auspices; and from inquiries I have made, I have no hesitation in stating that the gentlemen who have taken it up in London are of the utmost respectability, and influenced by the most honorable motives.

The *Author* of "California" has not expressed himself in favor of the extension of this proposed line, from Panama to the Northern Pacific, further than as the reader may construe his remarks in pages 315 to 320. But I feel confident, after viewing the success of steam in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea, in the Mediterranean, and backward and forward to England, at all seasons of the year; and, above all, in so many safe and expeditious voyages across the Atlantic, that the day is not far distant, when either the directors of the present Pacific Steam Navigation Company, or some new Company, will take up the *Northern line*. The numerous population along the Western coasts of Central America and Mexico, and the rich products of the adjoining provinces in gold, silver, pearls, cochineal, and indigo, ought to afford profitable employment for steamers as far up as the Gulf of California at least; and were emigration ever turning its tide to California, in the way suggested by the author, whether under the direction of Her Majesty's Government, or of a public company, the aid of steam could not fail to be required.

Under the strongest presentiment that these ideas will not lie many years inoperative, I have made calculations of the distances from Panama to the principal northern ports; which I here subjoin, as not without importance in the present inquiry. These calculations do not pretend to be exact to a mile, or to an hour; but they are sufficiently so for our purpose. Nine miles are allowed per hour.

The distances from Panama to San Diego, Monterey, San Francisco, Bodega, and Columbia river are given in two ways; first, by the line of coast, *via* Mazatlan, and second, from Panama direct.

TABLE OF DISTANCES AND HOURS STEAMING FROM PANAMA TO THE FOLLOWING PORTS, VIZ:

		Miles.	Hours.
From Panama to	the Gulf of Nicoya,	435	48
" "	the Gulf of Papagayo,	590	65.30
" "	Realejo,	680	75.30
" "	Sonsonate,	847	94
" "	Yztapa,	937	104
" "	Socunusco,	1095	121.30
" "	Tehuantepec,	1210	134.30
" "	Acapulco,	1495	166
" "	Navidad,	1810	201
" "	San Blas,	1962	218
" "	Mazatlan,	2091	232
" "	Guaymas,	2448	272
" "	Rio Gila, where it joins the Colorado,	2793	310
" "	San Diego, via Mazatlan	3016	335
	San Diego, direct from Panama,	2760	306.30
" "	Monterey, via Mazatlan	3376	375
	Monterey, direct,	3120	346.30
" "	San Francisco, via Mazatlan	3456	384
	San Francisco, direct,	3200	355.30
" "	Russian Settlement at Port Bodega, via Mazatlan	3514	390.30
	Russian Settlement at Port Bodega, direct,	3258	362
" "	the British Settlement at Columbia River, via Mazatlan	4034	448
	the British Settlement at Columbia River, direct,	3570	385.30
" "	Behring's Straits, via Columbia River,	5970	663
" "	Woahoo, Sandwich Islands,	4620	513
" "	St. Peter and St. Paul, Kamschatka, via Woahoo,	7380	820
" "	Jedo, in Japan, via Woahoo,	7950	883
" "	Canton, via Woahoo,	9540	1060

In the above table, the distance to Behring's Straits and the ports that follow, is given to satisfy the reader's curiosity, and not with a view to any practical utility, in the way of Steam Navigation, unless greatly improved and cheapened. It is not impossible that chemists may discover some new power, equal to steam, and producible at less expense, or that our engineers may invent some mechanical mode of propulsion for vessels, rendering the Isthmus of Panama the most direct and expeditious route, not only to these ports, but to *Manila* and the whole Eastern Archipelago.

It will be seen from this table, that the British settlement* on the Columbia river might be reached from Panama, by steam, in nineteen days, or say about forty days from England. By the same route, the important port of San Francisco might be reached in sixteen days from Panama, or thirty-six from England; and the Russsian settlement at La Bodega, in about six hours longer time. What a change in our communications, when the nearest Russian settlement on the west coast of America, will be brought within thirty-six days and six hours steaming, from our own shores; when even St. Peter and St. Paul, in Kamschatka, will be within fifty days, steaming; Jedo, within fifty-seven; Canton, within sixty-four, and Woahoo, in the Sandwich Islands, within forty-two days! Such are the wonderful results, that sooner or later may be expected from the mere power of steam, (improved and cheapened, as it may be, by fresh discoveries,) and the resumption of the *old* line of communication between Europe and the Pacific, via Chagres and Panama.

* I call it *British*, believing we have not yet relinquished its *Northern* bank.

I here use the word *resumption* deliberately; for, from the era of Columbus (1502) down to 1824, that line was the high road between Spain and her colonies, along the West coast, not only for Spanish settlers and merchants, but for whole cargoes of goods and regiments of soldiers. The famous Vasco Nunes de Balbao, so early as 1513, crossed the isthmus, with troops, from his settlement of Santa Maria del Darien, to the Gulf of San Miguel, S. E. of Panama; and the latter, eleven years afterward, viz. in 1524, had already become a city of sufficient importance to have a governor, and to furnish to Francisco Pizarro, Diego Almagro, and Fernando Luque, the men, arms, and ships with which they proceeded to the conquest of Peru. Soon afterward, it became the seat of a Royal "Audiencia," and, until the suppression of the Spanish galleons, and the opening of the free trade, was the grand emporium of all the merchandise from Spain, destined for the southern coast of New Granada and Peru, and the northern ports of Guatemala. During the late war of Independence in Peru, several regiments from Spain were sent up the Chagres to Panama, and from thence, by transports, to Peru; and it was by the same course, that Cruz Mourgeon—the last Vice-king appointed by Spain for New Granada—passed, with his forces, in 1822. The history of the Buccaneers proves that, as early as the days of Queen Elizabeth, our own piratical countrymen, and other lawless inhabitants of the West Indies, were quite familiar with this route, which they passed and repassed at pleasure; and until the trade with the Pacific, by Cape Horn, became open to our own merchants, they supplied the wants of the Spanish colonists on the Pacific coasts, through Jamaica, by the same channel. It is therefore clear, that in *resuming* that old line of communication, without the aid of either Railroad or Canal, (though doubtless either of these would greatly facilitate the transport of passengers and goods,) the Pacific Steam Navigation Company makes no new or dangerous experiment. A British merchant, then sailing on board the vessel whose course is given in the map attached to the present work, so recently as 1824, took on board in Panama and carried to San Blas, a thousand bales of goods, bought and packed in Jamaica, and which had been conveyed across the isthmus, by the way indicated. The expenses on each bale placed in Panama were seven dollars three rials, and consisted of the following items, viz.:

	Dolls.	Rials.
Freight on each bale from Jamaica to Chagres,	2	0
Agency at Chagres,	0	4
Freight per canoe from Chagres to Cruces,	1	5
Duty of Deposite in Cruces,	0	4
Agency,	0	2
Mule-hire from Cruces to Panama (7 leagues),	2	4
In all,	7	3

on each bale of about 150 lbs. weight. The canoes on the Chagres are large enough to take eighty of these bales at once; have "Toldos," (a kind of awning, made of cane and palm leaves, impervious to the sun and rain,) are quite safe, and managed, with great adroitness, by negro watermen remarkable for their size and strength.

It would require some nicety of calculation, to enable me to institute an exact comparison between these charges, and those on the same goods carried round by Cape Horn. I am inclined to think, that on goods outward the latter would be the cheapest route; but, on lace, fine linens, silks, and jewelry, the additional expense could not be sensibly felt; and where the object is to be *first* in a market; in the time of war, to save risk; and at all times, to save interest of money, the

Panama and Chagres route—even as it was in 1824, and is now—must be the preferable one, both as regards the above description of goods outward, and bullion, specie, cochineal, and indigo homeward.

Besides the seven dollars three rials above mentioned, I may state that, in 1824, the transit duties levied in Panama were three dollars two rials on each bale; but by a late decree of the government of New Granada, all the transit duties have been abolished, so that, perhaps, at this moment, the whole charges may not exceed six dollars per bale, from Jamaica to Panama. I lately conversed with an intelligent Havana merchant, D. R. Clarke, Esq., now in London, who has been six voyages from Jamaica (backward and forward) to Panama: he never incurred the smallest loss or risk either from the river, the road, the natives, or the climate; but to avoid delay, he thinks that a tram railroad,* either from the junction of the Trinidad with the Chagres to Panama, or from Portobello to Panama, would be of great use, easily made, and cheaply supported. Perhaps the former would be preferable, on account of the dangerous fevers which prevail in Portobello, but not on the Chagres.

The above remarks are made, presuming that Her Majesty's government establishes a line of steamers through the West Indies as far as to Chagres, and that the Pacific Steam Navigation Company take the passengers and goods up at Panama, in the Pacific, carrying them thence, on their way south and north, without delay; for the reader will find that a vessel (a fast-sailing schooner, of the class known under the designation of "*Clipper*") took thirty-two days in *sailing* from Panama to San Blas, a voyage which, by a steamer proceeding direct, might be accomplished in nine days. A dull sailing vessel would have taken perhaps sixty days, or more, to perform the same voyage, from the extreme difficulty of sailing out to the westward from Panama Bay, in consequence of calms, alternating with squalls from all directions, and the struggle she would have to maintain, in proceeding along the coasts of Central America and Mexico, against opposing winds and currents. The same "clipper" (though to go eleven and eleven-and-a-half knots per hour, was not unusual with her,) took twelve days on her voyage from Valparaiso, in sailing from the Equator to Panama. I mention these apparently uninteresting minutiæ, to establish the important facts, that even were such a canal made as the author of "California" recommends, without steamers ready at Panama (as the Pacific Steam Navigation Company proposes to have them,) to carry on, at once, goods and passengers northward and southward, little advantage would be gained, as regards ports to the southward of Payta, or northward of Manzanillo, on the coast of Mexico. The saving of time would not be very great, and the expense, *allowing for tolls on the canal*, would, I fear, not be much less, than by the voyage round Cape Horn.

I do not think that steamers from Panama northward, would pay the owners farther than San Blas or Mazatlan: were, indeed, the tide of emigration setting strongly to California or the settlements on the Columbia River, occasional trips *might* be made *so far*, profitably; but as for Woahoo, Jedo, Canton, and other places named in the calculations above given, steamers from Panama to *them* will never pay, until in the progress of discovery, the expenses of steamers are brought down more nearly to a level with those of sailing vessels. If ever this desirable event be realized, the ideas here thrown out will assume a practical importance; and it will behoove Great Britain, as queen of the sea, to maintain by *steam* the same naval character which she has earned by canvas. The Isthmus of Panama will then become a point of very great importance.

* I mean a road with rails, where the carriages and wagons are dragged by horses and mules, both of which abound and are cheap in the Isthmus.

The author of "California" hints the possibility that the Isthmus might be ceded to some European State: if it ever should be so ceded, the nation holding it will acquire an immense influence and power over the communications of the world, (supposing the above improvements in steam,) with a territory well-wooded, well-watered, fertile in the extreme, rich in gold and pearl fisheries, capable of supporting a numerous population, and not, by any means, *generally* unhealthy; while the inhabitants will acquire that wealth and prosperity, which the advantages of their situation secure to them. But even allowing—as is most probable—that New Granada will continue to retain its sovereignty over the Isthmus, there is nothing in the history or character of that Republic which can justify our fears that it will not religiously maintain its stipulations in favor of the route across to Panama. Of all the South American Republics, New Granada has shown the greatest respect to public faith; and the Hurtados, the Arosamenas, the Gomezes, the Quezadas, the Paredeses, and other respectable inhabitants of Panama, are too much alive to the continuance and improvement of the *old overland intercourse*, whereby their city has flourished, not to protest against any injurious imposts, or prejudicial interference. I believe that hitherto, no passenger nor merchant travelling across to Panama, can justly complain of any outrage, either to his person or property, from either the local authorities, or from individuals. They are all aware, that nothing short of the resumption of the old line of communication between Europe and the Pacific, can restore their former prosperity, and develop the latent resources of their beautiful country; and they are prepared to make every exertion to secure so desirable an object.

Had the line of steamers above suggested been now in operation, it is obvious that the present French blockade of the Atlantic ports of Mexico could have been counteracted, by sending the cargoes of vessels warned off, to Chagres, across to Panama, and thence to the Mexican ports of the Pacific.

In conclusion, I may state, that I understand proposals for Steam Navigation on the Atlantic ports have been submitted to the Mexican government, by a firm of great standing in that country and in London, and that a favorable answer is expected by the first packet.

PANAMA AND THE PACIFIC. A MEMORANDUM SENT TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, ON THE ADVANTAGE OF USING THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA AS A MORE RAPID MEANS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE PORTS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN. BY THE HON. P. CAMPBELL SCARLETT.

In passing within the last few months down the coast of South America, on the Pacific side, from Valparaiso, through Lima, to Payta, in the neighborhood of Guayaquil, and to Panama, and from thence to the Atlantic Ocean across the Isthmus of Darien, I had occasion to observe the truth of representations frequently made to me by British merchants in those settlements: how much shorter and more certain might be the communication of intelligence from those places to England by that route, than by the passage round Cape Horn. That passage in merchant vessels to and from England direct, averages

	Days.
For Valparaiso,	100
" Lima,	110
" Guayaquil,	120

a length of time, which is not only inconvenient for commercial objects, but which in some degree cuts off the British settler from correspondence with his friends and family, and unnecessarily prolongs the period of receiving such intelligence as the British Consuls in those quarters may find it expedient to convey to the Government. Whereas the passage by Panama might, with ease, be effected in the following periods:

	Days.
From Valparaiso, - - - - - - - - -	62
" Lima, - - - - - - - - -	51
" Guayaquil, - - - - - - - - -	46

as the following details will show:

From Valparaiso to Lima, - - - - - - - -	11
" Lima to Payta or Guayaquil, - - - - - -	5
" Payta to Panama, - - - - - - - -	10
Across the Isthmus, - - - - - - - - -	1
Thence to England, touching at one of the Windward Islands	35
Making in the whole, - -	62*

Taking Lima as a central position, by this calculation, it appears that the difference of time in conveying correspondence from the western coast of South America to England, may be thus stated:

	Days.
From Lima by Cape Horn, - - - - - - -	110
" " Panama, - - - - - - - -	51
Difference of time in favor of the route by the West Indies,	59

The passage from Panama to Chagres is perfectly easy, being only twenty-one miles by land, and the remainder by a river, safe and navigable for boats and canoes. This was the route by which the several towns and provinces on the Pacific Ocean made their communications with Europe, before the separation of the Colonies from Spain; but the frequent revolutions which have taken place in South America, and the consequent poverty and want of enterprise in the Spanish part of the population, seem to have put a stop to the regular and periodical communications between these places, which were formerly established by public authority.

The following table demonstrates that a vessel, sailing from England, and doubling the Cape of Good Hope, has to sail as follows:

I.	1st, for Ceylon, - - -	10,760 miles (geographical.)	
	2nd, for Calcutta, - - -	12,770 "	
	3rd, for Port Jackson, - -	16,950 "	
	4th, for Canton, - - -	16,700 "	without touching at the Indies.
	5th, for Panama, - - -	24,140 "	

II. That the same sailing from England, and doubling Cape Horn, will be:

1st, for Valparaiso, - -	10,840 miles.
2nd, for Panama, - - -	15,716 "
3rd, for Canton, - - -	23,156 "
4th, for Ceylon, - - -	26,616 "
5th, for Port Jackson, - -	20,840 "

* This is unnecessarily long. The journey, by way of the Isthmus, has been accomplished from Lima to Liverpool in 46 days

III. That the same vessel, sailing from England, and passing through the canal at the Isthmus of Darien, will have to sail only:

1st, from Europe to	Panama,	4,171	miles.
2nd, "	Canton,	11,612	"
3rd, "	Valparaiso,	9,048	"
4th, "	Port Jackson, and Hobart-town,	11,530	"
5th, "	Ceylon,	15,072	"

COMPARATIVE TABLE.

	By Cape of Good Hope.	By Cape Horn.	By Panama Canal.
To Ceylon,	10,760	26,616	15,072
To Port Jackson,	16,650	10,840	11,536
To Canton,	20,970 (touching at Calcutta.)		
"	16,700	23,156	11,612
To Panama,	24,140	15,716	4,171
To Valparaiso,	25,950	10,840	9,048
To Lima,	26,200	12,936	6,952

I. Distances, in a right line, of the principal stopping-places for steamships, departing from Falmouth, by the Cape of Good Hope, in India, Sumatra, China, Australasia, Islands of Owhayi and Otaheite, and upon the Western Coast of America:

From	To	Geographical miles.	Total.
Falmouth	Canary Isles,	1,860	
Canary Isles	Cape Verd,	840	
Cape Verd	Ascension Isles,	1,210	
Ascension Isles	St. Helena,	720	
St. Helena	Cape of Good Hope,	1,740	6,400
Cape of Good Hope	Cape of Aiquilles,	720	
Cape of Aiquilles	Isle of France	1,820	
Isle of France	Ceylon,	1,820	
Ceylon	Bombay,	960	
Ceylon	Madras,	750	
Madras	Calcutta,	1,260	7,330
Ceylon	Batavia,	1,680	
Batavia	Swan River (coast of Australasia)	1,630	
Swan River	Hobart-town (Van Dieman's Land)	2,160	
Hobart-town	Port Jackson,	720	6,190
Port Jackson	Sandwich Islands,	3,600	
Port Jackson	Society Islands, Otaheite,	3,104	6,704

FROM ENGLAND TO CANTON.

From	To	Geographical miles.	Total.
Falmouth	Batavia,	15,410	
Batavia	Canton,	1,780	17,190
Canton	Owhayi,	3,960	
Owhayi	Panama,	3,480	24,630

From which we see that, by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they sail from—

1st, Falmouth to Calcutta,	13,730	
2nd, Falmouth to Canton,	17,190	
3rd, Canton to Panama,	7,440	38,360

II. Distances, in a right line, of the principal stopping-places, for steamships sailing from Falmouth by way of Cape Horn, for Panama, Australasia, Canton, &c.

From	To	Geographical miles.	Total
Falmouth	Terceira, (Azores)	1,620	
Terceira	Olinda (Pernambuco)	2,520	
Olinda	Rio Janeiro,	1,460	
Rio Janeiro	Buenos Ayres	1,400	
Buenos Ayres	Cape Horn,	2,040	9,040
Cape Horn	Valparaiso,	2,200	
Valparaiso	Lima,	2,096	
Lima	Panama,	2,780	7,076
Falmouth	Panama,		16,116
Panama	Owhayi,	3,480	
Owhayi	Canton,	3,960	7,440
Falmouth	Canton,		23,556
Canton	Batavia,	1,780	
Batavia	Ceylon,	1,680	
Falmouth	Ceylon,		27,016

III. Distances by the projected Canal at Panama:

From	To	Geographical miles.	Total.
Falmouth	Terceira,	1,620	
Terceira	Chagres,	3,540	
Chagres	Panama, across the Isthmus of Darien,	12	5,172
Panama	Owhayi,	3,480	
Owhayi	Canton,	3,960	7,440
Falmouth	Canton,		12,612
Falmouth	Panama,	5,172	
Panama	Lima,	2,780	
Lima	Valparaiso,	2,096	10,048
Panama	Otaheite,	3,540	
Otaheite	Port Jackson,	3,104	
Port Jackson	Hobart-town,	720	7,364
Falmouth,	Hobart-town,		17,412

This communication might be very easily effected by the addition of a few small fast-sailing vessels of war, or steamers, which should make periodical visits to the towns I have mentioned.

The advantages of a direct communication between Panama and the West Indies, has already been felt and obtained by the practice of the admiral on the West India station, who is accustomed to dispatch a sailing vessel of war, at stated periods, to Chagres, in order to bring official and other correspondence, as well as specie, from the Pacific coast of South America.

I am the more induced to make these representations, from a conversation I had with Commodore Mason, in which he expressed his concern, that he had not adequate force under his control to give protection to British commerce on the South American shore of the Pacific, and his confidence in the opinion, which has been much confirmed by my own observation, as well as by the report of others, more competent than myself, that such commerce has a tendency to increase if duly protected; and that, if vessels of war were more frequently enabled to visit the

ports on the coast from Valparaiso to Panama, better security would be afforded to British merchants against the revolutions, to which the property of all persons resident on those shores is so often exposed, from the feebleness of the Governments, and the successive changes which are the consequence of that weakness.

The establishment of steamboats would render the return of correspondence, against the prevailing southerly winds, of equal rapidity. The trade-winds are not violent in that sea, and men-of-war, in particular, have generally made the passage down the coast with great dispatch. However, the introduction of Steam Navigation in the West Indies, having already shown that merchant sailing vessels are disposed to carry sufficient coal in ballast, for the supply of fuel; it is equally obvious that the same facilities might be afforded to carry out coal to the Pacific coast, until such time as, from its raised value and the increased demand for it, the inhabitants of those regions may think it worth their while to work the veins of coal, which are well known to exist at various places on the western coast.*

London, Sept. 6, 1825.

* South America and Pacific. Lond, 1826. Vol. II. p. 221.

No. 2.

Since my return to the United States, I have seen the following interesting letters in the National Intelligencer, on American Antiquities, from Mr. Colcraft. It is to be hoped that he will shortly favor the public with an accurate drawing of the characters on the tablet.

GRAVE CREEK FLATS, (Va.) August 23, 1843.

I have devoted several days to the examination of the antiquities of this place and its vicinity, and find them to be of even more interest than was anticipated. The most prominent object of curiosity is the great tumulus, of which notices have appeared in western papers; but this heavy structure of earth is not isolated. It is but one of a series of mounds, and other evidences of ancient occupation at this point, of more than ordinary interest. I have visited and examined seven mounds, situated within a short distance of each other. They occupy the summit level of a rich alluvial plain, stretching on the left or Virginia bank of the Ohio, between the junction of Big and Little Green Creeks with that stream. They appear to have been connected by low earthen intrenchments, of which plain traces are still visible on some parts of the commons. They included a well, stoned up in the usual manner, which is now filled with rubbish.

The summit of this plain is probably seventy-five feet above the present summer level of the Ohio. It constitutes the second bench or rise of land above the water. It is on this summit, and on one of the most elevated parts of it, that the great tumulus stands. It is in the shape of a broad cone, cut off at the apex, where it is some fifty feet across. This area is quite level, and commands a view of the entire plain, and of the river above and below, and the west shore of the Ohio in front. Any public transaction on this area would be visible to multitudes around it, and it has, in this respect, all the advantages of the Mexican and Yucatanese teocalli. The circumference of the base has been stated at a little under nine hundred feet; its height is sixty-nine feet.

The most interesting object of antiquarian inquiry is a small flat stone, inscribed with antique alphabetic characters, which was disclosed on the opening of the large mound. These characters are in the ancient rock alphabet of sixteen right and acute angled single strokes, used by the Pelasgi and other early Mediterranean nations, and which is the parent of the modern Runic as well as the Bardic. It is now some four or five years since the completion of the excavations, so far as they have been made, and the discovery of this relic. Several copies of it soon got abroad, which differed from each other, and, it was supposed, from the original. This conjecture is true: neither the print published in the Cincinnati Gazette in 1839, nor that in the American Pioneer in 1843, is correct. I have terminated this uncertainty by taking copies by a scientific process, which does not leave the lines and figures to the uncertainty of man's pencil.

The existence of this ancient art here could not be admitted, otherwise than as an insulated fact, without some corroborative evidence in habits and customs, which it would be reasonable to look for in the existing ruins of ancient occupancy. It is thought some such testimony has been found. I rode out yesterday three miles, back to the range of high hills which encompass this sub-valley, to see a rude tower of stone standing on an elevated point, called Parr's point, which commands a view of the whole plain, and which appears to have been constructed as a watch-tower, or look-out, from which to descry an approaching enemy. It is

much dilapidated. About six or seven feet of the work is still entire. It is circular, and composed of rough stones, without mortar, or the mark of a hammer. A heavy mass of fallen wall lies around, covering an area of some forty feet in diameter. Two similar points of observation, occupied by dilapidated towers, are represented to exist, one at the prominent summit of the Ohio and Grave Creek hills, and another on the promontory on the opposite side of the Ohio, in Belmont county, Ohio.

It is known to all acquainted with the warlike habits of our Indians, that they never evinced the foresight to post a regular sentry, and these rude towers may be regarded as of contemporaneous age with the interment of the inscription.

Several polished tubes of stone have been found in one of the lesser mounds, the use of which is not very apparent. One of these, now on my table, is twelve inches long, one and a quarter wide at one end, and one and a half at the other. It is made of a fine, compact, lead-blue steatite, mottled, and has been constructed by boring, in the manner of a gun-barrel. This boring has been continued to within about three-eighths of an inch of the larger end, through which but a small aperture is left. If this small aperture be looked through, objects at a distance are more clearly seen. Whether it had this telescopic use or others, the degree of art evinced in its construction is far from rude. By inserting a wooden rod and valve, this tube would be converted into a powerful syphon or syringe.

I have not space to notice one or two additional traits, which serve to awaken new interest at this ancient point of aboriginal and apparently mixed settlement, and must omit them till my next. Yours, truly,

HENRY R. COLCRAFT.

GRAVE CREEK FLATS, August 24.

The great mound, at these flats, was opened as a place of public resort about four years ago. For this purpose a horizontal gallery to its centre was dug and bricked up, and provided with a door. The centre was walled round as a rotunda, of about twenty-five feet diameter, and a shaft was sunk from the top to intersect it; it was in these two excavations that the skeletons and accompanying relics and ornaments were found. All those articles are arranged for exhibition in this rotunda, which is lighted up with candles. The lowermost skeleton is almost entire, and in a good state of preservation, and is put up by means of wires, on the walls. It has been overstretched in the process, so as to measure six feet; it should be about five feet eight inches. It exhibits a noble frame of the human species, bearing a skull with craniological developments of a highly favorable character. The face bones are elongated, with a long chin and symmetrical jaw, in which a full and fine set of teeth, above and below, are present. The skeletons in the upper vault, where the inscription stone was found, are nearly all destroyed.

It is a damp and gloomy repository, and exhibits in the roof and walls of the rotunda one of the most extraordinary sepulchral displays which the world affords. On casting the eye up to the ceiling, and the heads of the pillars supporting it, it is found to be incrusted, or rather festooned, with a white, soft, flaky mass of matter, which had exuded from the mound above. This, apparently, animal exudation is as white as snow. It hangs in pendent masses and globular drops; the surface is covered with large globules of clear water, which in the reflected light have all the brilliancy of diamonds. These drops of water trickle to the floor, and occasionally the exuded white matter falls. The wooden pillars are furnished

with the appearance of capitals, by this substance. That it is the result of a soil highly charged with particles of matter, arising from the decay or incineration of human bodies, is the only theory by which we may account for the phenomenon. Curious and unique it certainly is, and with the faint light of a few candles, it would not require much imagination to invest the entire rotunda with sylph-like forms of the sheeted dead.

An old Cherokee chief, who visited this scene recently, with his companions, on his way to the West, was so excited and indignant at the desecration of the tumulus, by this display of bones and relics to the gaze of the white race, that he became furious and unmanageable; his friends and interpreters had to force him out, to prevent his assassinating the guide; and soon after he drowned his senses in alcohol.

That this spot was a very ancient point of settlement by the hunter race in the Ohio valley, and that it was inhabited by the present red race of North American Indians, on the arrival of whites west of the Alleghanies, are both admitted facts; nor would the historian and antiquary ever have busied themselves further in the matter had not the inscribed stone come to light, in the year 1839. I was informed, yesterday, that another inscription stone had been found, in one of the smaller mounds on these flats, about five years ago, and have obtained data sufficient as to its present location to put the Ethnological Society on its trace. If, indeed, these inscriptions shall lead us to admit that the Continent was visited by Europeans prior to the era of Columbus, it is a question of very high antiquarian interest to determine who the visitors were, and what they have actually left on record in these antique tablets.

I have only time to add a single additional fact. Among the articles found in this cluster of mounds, the greater part are commonplace, in our Western mounds and town-ruins. I have noticed but one which bears the character of that unique type of architecture, found by Mr. Stephens and Mr. Catherwood, in Central America and Yucatan. With the valuable monumental standards of comparison furnished by these gentlemen before me, it is impossible not to recognize, in an ornamental stone, found in one of the lesser mounds here, a specimen of similar workmanship. It is in the style of the heavy feather-sculptured ornament of Yucatan—the material being a wax yellow sand-stone, darkened by time. I have taken such notes and drawings of the objects above referred to, as will enable me, I trust, in due time, to give a connected account of them to our incipient society.

Yours truly,

HENRY R. COLCRAFT.

I have been favored with a fac-simile of this stone, by Mr. Bartlett, the learned and indefatigable Secretary of our Ethnological Society, who, in his letter communicating the drawings, observes:

"I must state a curious fact in regard to the characters on this Tablet. I have compared them with the old alphabets of Europe, and find they assimilate strongly with the letters of the old Phœnician and Anglo-Saxon. Many of the characters may be found in the ancient Greek, Etruscan, Phœnician, Cimbric or Welsh, Celt-Iberic, Anglo-Saxon, &c. In the Celt-Iberic they predominate, as almost every character is to be found in that ancient alphabet. I have racked my brain not a little in trying to decipher them, and, though their value is easily ascertained, they cannot be combined so as to be rendered into anything intelligible. It is probable that we have not a correct fac-simile; but this will now be remedied, as Mr. Colcraft will take an impression in wax of the whole tablet."

No. 3.

SINCE this volume went to press, I have been favored with the following very instructive letter, from HORATIO HALE, Esq., the learned philologist who accompanied the Exploring Expedition, under the command of Captain Wilkes.

It is pleasant, when groping backward through the labyrinth of time, to have, now and then, some tangled threads of the lost clue thrown into our hands; and I have no doubt that, when the result of this eminent scholar's labors are placed before the public, they will obtain for him a reputation commensurate with his genius and industry.

"PHILADELPHIA, October, 1843.

"MY DEAR SIR:

"It gives me pleasure to learn, that you are still occupied with your work on Mexico, which has been long expected with great interest. There are few countries, so far as I could judge, which contain more that is worthy of being described; and fewer still, of which so little is accurately known.

"As to the inquiries contained in your letter, I am happy to find that we have arrived, by different roads, at the same conclusion, with regard to the origin of the Mexican Tribes, and the direction in which their migration took place. The results of such researches as I have been able to make into the languages of the western coast of America, though not of a positive nature, seem to me strongly to favor the views which you seem to entertain, of the progress of the emigrant tribes from their probable crossing-place at Behring's Straits, along the coast—or rather, between the coast and the Rocky Mountains—to the Mexican plateau.

"Very soon after commencing my investigations in Oregon, I was struck by two facts of considerable importance. *First;* that the numbers of distinct families of languages, or independent races, was greater than was to be found, in so small a space, in any part of the known world; and, *secondly;* that, in several cases, the different tribes, or subdivisions of a family, were dispersed at great distances from each other, and surrounded by several tribes speaking distinct languages. I observed, that these scattered bands were generally disposed in a line from north to south. It seemed, therefore, not an unreasonable supposition, that if the numerous hordes which have, at different periods, overrun the Mexican plains, proceeded in this direction, they may have left along their track, from time to time, detached parties, which, from some motive of discontent, would separate from the main body, and allow it to proceed without them. This would account, both for the number of small tribes speaking distinct languages, and for the manner in which those speaking the same language, are dispersed through the region.

"As an example, I may mention the Athabascan family or race, which occupies the northern part of our Continent, next to the Esquimaux, and which has been found on our northwest coast, within a hundred miles of Behring's Straits. The Carrier Indians, who live north of the Oregon Territory, in about 55° latitude, belong to this family. Five hundred miles south of these, not far to the north of the Columbia, I found a small tribe whose language showed them to have had the same origin with the Carriers. Still farther south, on the other bank of the Columbia, and separated from the last-mentioned by the Chinook tribe, was another

detached band of the same affinity; and a hundred miles south of these, on the Umqua river, was the tribe from which it derives its name, speaking also a cognate language. Here is a single chain, reaching from about latitude 65° to 43°, or more than half-way from Behring's Straits to the City of Mexico. It may, perhaps, hereafter, be carried still farther, as my researches did not extend much beyond the last-mentioned point.

"I may also observe, that the Shoshonees, or Snake Indians, are found, first, on the head waters of the Columbia—then near the head of the California Gulf; and, again—under the dreaded name of Cumanches, pushing their incursions into the heart of Texas.

"In the later history of this tribe—the Shoshonees proper—there is a fact worthy of notice. I was assured by trustworthy persons, long resident in that region, that the Snake Indians had formerly lived considerably north of the present position—occupying the territory now in the possession of the powerful Blackfeet confederacy—who have expelled them from their ancient hunting-grounds; and, it was asserted, that there were old men now living among the Shoshonees, who had a better knowledge of the country, at present occupied by the Blackfeet Indians, than any of the latter themselves. My informants, (old fur-traders,) gave it as their belief, that all the tribes in that region were gradually advancing toward the south. In this instance, the movement of the Blackfeet tribes is not wholly voluntary, as they are constantly harassed on the north by hostile bands of Crees and Sioux; while the Shoshonees, in their southward progress, press before them the Uchis and Apachés, with whose ravages on the northern borders of Mexico you are, of course, well acquainted.

"We are familiar with a similar movement on the old Continent, and understand how it originates in the hardy valor of northern regions, forcing its way toward a more genial climate and a more bountiful soil. We can also perceive how, among wandering tribes, like our Western Indians—by nature migratory, and bound by no ties of cultivation to the land which they occupy—this movement should be comparatively rapid; and we can thus see how a large body (like the Blackfeet nation, for instance,) might, within a few generations, be urged onward, step by step, from the northern sea to the Mexican plains. It has seemed to me that this fact might be of some importance, as serving to illustrate the history (given by Humboldt,) which the Aztecs had preserved of their migration, and with which you must be familiar. I refer more particularly to their gradual progress, (by stages, as it were,) making long halts from time to time, and again taking up their line of march toward the south. I have not this account before me now, but on reading it a few months ago, I thought I could trace in the epithets which they affixed to their different encampments, (if we may apply this term to their halting-places,) some of the features of the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

"It is evident that these deductions would be reduced to certainty, if we could discover some resemblance between any of the languages of Oregon and those of Mexico. Thus far, however, the comparison has not been attended with success. Of the *twenty* distinct languages, spoken within the limits of Ancient Mexico, which have been reduced to writing by the Catholic Missionaries, I have been able to obtain grammars of only five. The collection which you aided me in making in Mexico, is, indeed, the largest that I know of in this country. In Europe, however, all that has been published on these subjects, and many valuable manuscripts, are preserved; and. at some future day, an opportunity may offer of completing the comparison."

APPENDIX

No. 4.

LIST OF PRICES,

OF RENTS, PROVISIONS, ETC., TO HOUSEKEEPERS IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.

MEATS.

Beef,	12½ cents per	20 oz.
Mutton	12½ "	18 "
Hams,	50 "	lb.
Ducks,	37½ "	pair.
Turkeys,	$1 50 "	each.
Fowls,	50 "	"
Pigeons,	25 "	pair.

FISH.

Pescado-blanco, from the lake, 62½ cents per lb.

VEGETABLES, TEA, COFFEE, ETC.

Onions,	12½ cents per dozen.
Artichokes,	25 " "
Cauliflowers,	12½ " each (small)
Cabbages,	12½ to 25 cents each.
Peas,	25 cents per pint.
Corn,	$5 to $6 per *carga* of 400 lbs.
Barley,	$3 " "
Rice,	12½ cents per lb.
Radishes,	6¼ " 2½ dozen.
Potatoes,	12½ " quart.
Beans (frigoles)	12½ " "
Chilé peppers,	31¼ " lb.
Tomatoes,	12½ " dozen.
Bread,	6¼ cents for four small loaves, 16 ounces in all.
Biscuits,	6¼ cents per 16 oz.
Chocolate,	50 " lb.
Tea,	$2 to $3 per lb.
Coffee,	25 to 37½ cents per lb.
Sugar (refined)	18¾ cents per lb.
Sugar (white)	12½ " "

FRUITS.

Pines,	12½ cents each.
Chirimoyas,	6¼ to 12½ cents each.
Peaches,	6¼ cents for four.
Oranges,	6¼ " six.
Plantains,	6¼ " four.
Grapes,	25 " lb.
Walnuts,	6¼ " forty.
Melons,	6¼ to 12½ cents each.
Avocates,	6¼ cents for four.
Apples,	12½ " dozen.
Tunas,	6¼ " "
Lemons,	6¼ " "
Guyavas,	6¼ " eight.
Granaditas,	6¼ " four.

DRINKS.

Milk,	6¼ cents per quart.
Pulqué,	6¼ " three quarts
Water,	6¼ " barrel.
Aguardiente,	18¾ " quart.
Mescal,	25 " "
Chicha,	6¼ " three pints.
Orgeat,	6¼ " quart.
Agua de chia,	6¼ " "

FUEL.

Charcoal, 6¼ cents for six lbs.

SERVANTS.

Cook,	$4 to $6 per month.
Coachman,	15 to 20 "
Waiter,	15 "
Housekeeper,	8 to 10 "
Chambermaid,	3 to 4 "
Scullion,	3 to 4 "

RENTS.

They vary according to situation, but they are very high throughout the Capital; $500—$2500; and even higher rates are given for the very best.

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